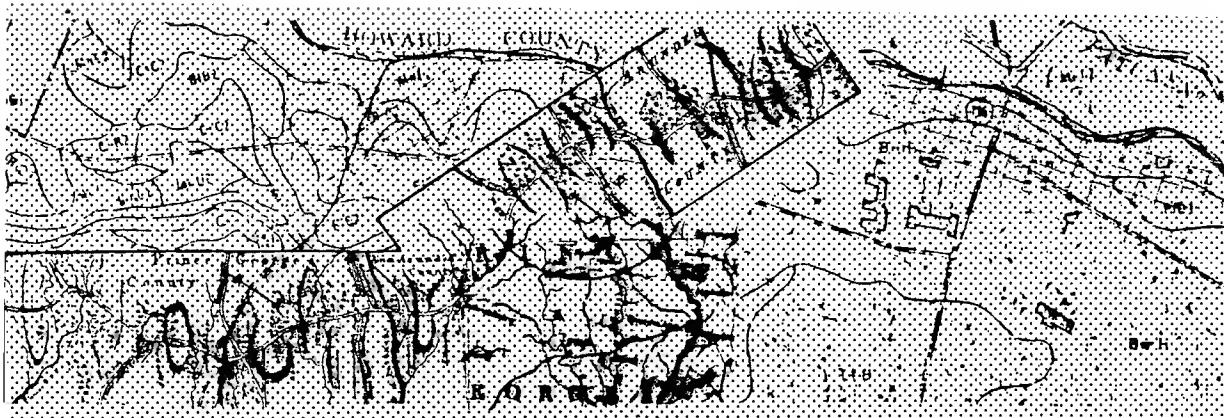


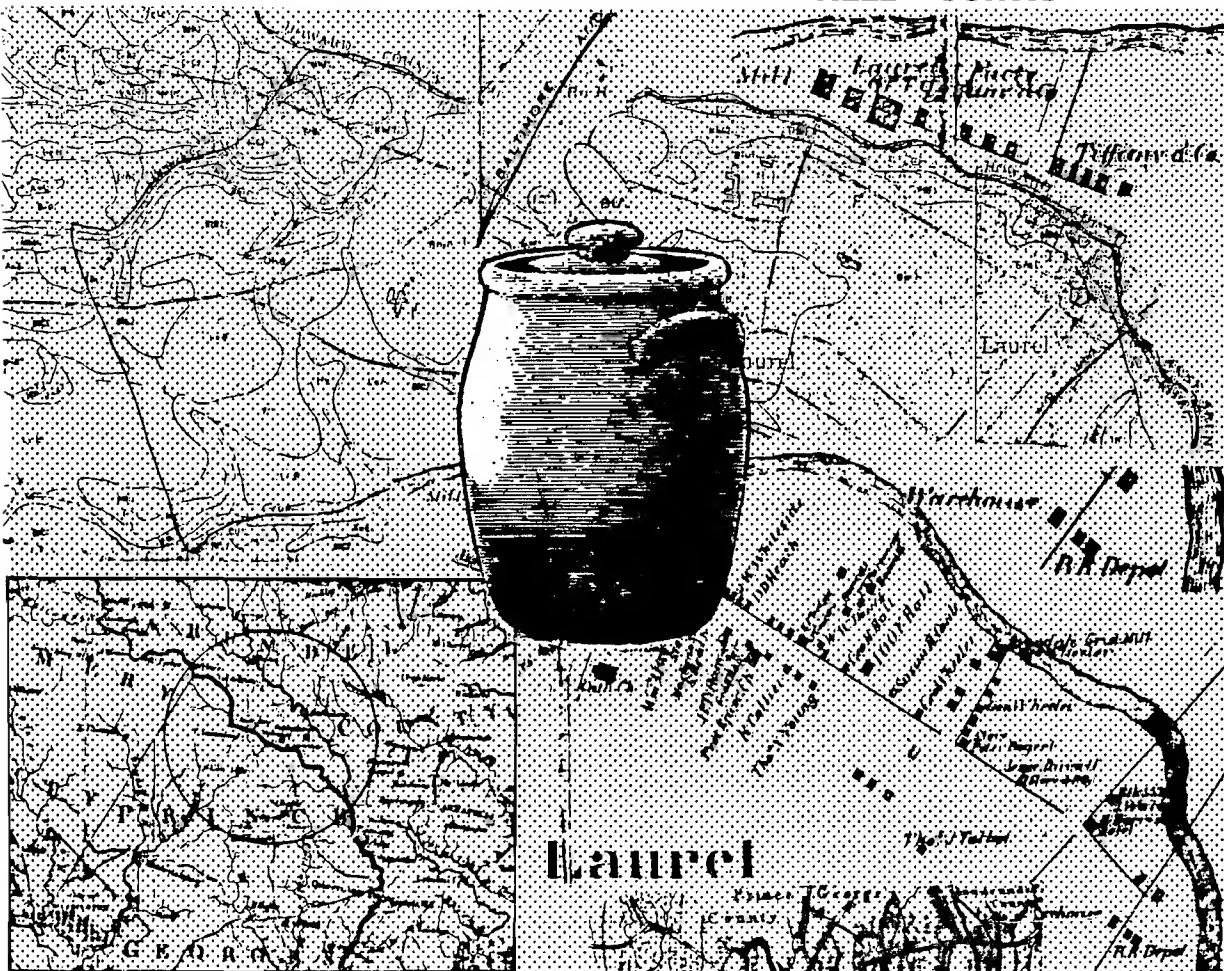
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# **HUMAN ADAPTATION TO THE FALL LINE SETTING**

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR THE ARCHEOLOGY OF LAUREL MARYLAND**

**CONRAD JAY BLADEY  
HELEN CURTIS**



**City of Laurel Archeological Survey Publication No.. 2**



## Update to the 1983 Edition- December 1, 2010

When I started work as the first municipal archeologist in the state of Maryland I was optimistic that the truths self evident in our relationship to the archeological record would help to structure the relationship of people and governments to the land.

If only we could transform the archeological record into a dimension of the ecology that was respected as being as essential and valuable as any other. We have been taught to respect the air, the ground water and now we are expected to recycle and refrain from pollution. Why could we not extend this awareness to the archeological record?

The awareness that I sought required archeology to become a part of the life way. The interface between the record and all human activity needed to be respected at all times. Awareness could not be limited to significant sites nor could it neglect the presence and absence information inherent in artifacts found without context. Just as one would never pollute the earth or ground water one would never disturb the earth unnecessarily and when necessary take steps to always record what was present scientifically and care for the artifacts and information responsibly.

While I was fortunate to have my archeological program recognized by the City of Laurel, Maryland, even though it was not funded. At the first instant of its implementation I found myself hauled in before the city administrator and mayor who steamrolled careless development and essentially shut my program down.

Today writing in 2010 I see some but very little progress. The Archeological environment in contrast with other dimensions of ecology is neglected and respect for it is still not a part of the life way. We have to depend upon limited government mandates and even then we find negotiations rather than insistence that the environment is treated scientifically at all times.

Governmental and benevolent funding can not and never will be able to accomplish what can be done when like recycling, archeological awareness is brought into the life way of each and every citizen always.

This publication brings together important drawings, maps, ecological and soil studies and observations which demonstrate the existence of an important Archeological environment in Laurel, Maryland. I hope that by granting greater access that someday that environment will be respected by one and all.

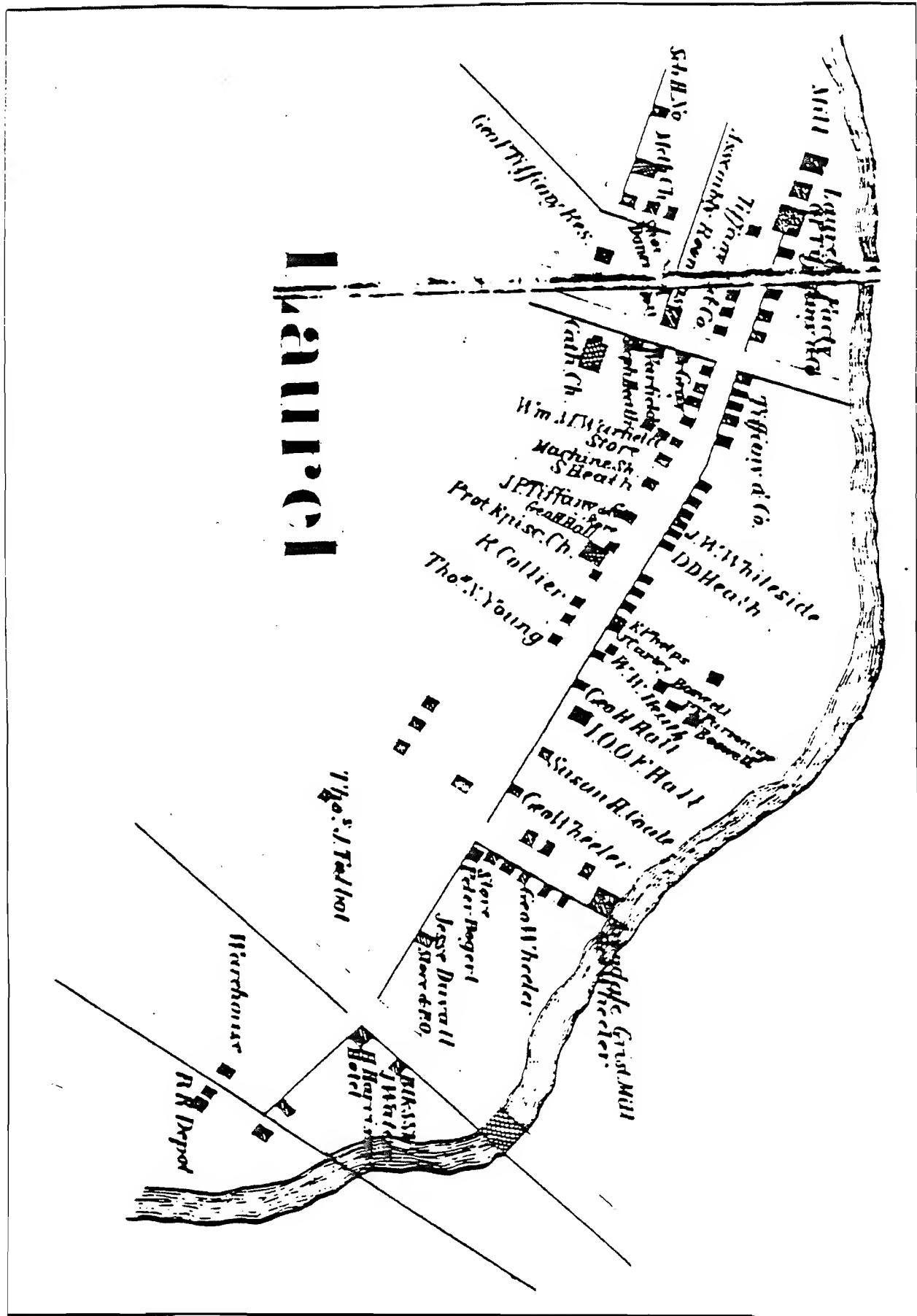
I hereby grant permission for this document to be utilized freely including publication without further permission providing that it is cited accurately and completely.

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This is the *last* segment of the Simon L. Martine 1861 Map of Prince George's County.



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## Introduction

Human cultural history within the study area known as Laurel, Maryland has remained a dark confusing unknown across which generations of city planners and Laurel residents have stumbled repeatedly in recent centuries and decades. A prerequisite to understanding any history is an accurate and high level description of the human and natural setting in which such history occurs. This study has made a beginning in the process of description so essential to future fieldwork and final explanation. In the chapters that follow an attempt has been made to document the present state of our knowledge, our predictions for future discoveries, and the basic and broad trends of human adaptation in Laurel. It is hoped that following from this work will be a more complete study of the underlying cross-currents of multi-lineal evolutionary adaptation which helped to weave the basic patterns in the tapestry of Laurel's history. From these basic trends we shall build a path to the understanding of particular selections and a final explanation of this particular evolutionary course. Thus, by accounting for the past we may be more able to account for the selections of the future.

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Tom S. Rabb  
4/2/83



### Location and Boundaries

The study area is located in Laurel, Maryland and lies in the northeast of Prince George's County, senatorial district twenty-one, Maryland Archeological Research Unit number thirteen (Patuxent Drainage, map 12). The area of study is defined by both natural, technological, and cultural/urban boundaries (maps 1, 2).

The Patuxent River running northwest to southeast forms the boundary between Howard and Prince George's Counties; its banks on the Howard County side define the northern boundary of the study area.

The Walker Branch, which flows into the Patuxent at the transitional Fall Line zone between the Piedmont and and Atlantic Coastal Plain physiographic provinces, will be considered the northwest boundary.

The Crow Branch defines the southern boundary of the study area and serves both as an urban and natural boundary.

The B & O railroad track, laid in 1835, forms a transportation and technological boundary reflecting a soils/ ecological boundary. The railroad tracks are also located on the Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County line, that marks the eastern boundary of the study area.

## Soils

There are nine varieties of soil in the study area. These soils vary in characteristics of slope, drainage, and potential for supporting plant and animal populations.

Within the boundaries of the study area the most abundant soil type is the Beltsville Urban land complex, followed by Beltsville silt loam. The other soils present, in order of predominance are: Leonardtown silt loam, Manor loam, Bibb silt loam, Croom gravelly sandy loam, Comus silt loam, Ochlockonee silt loam (local alluvium) and Hyde silt loam. Slopes range from 0% to 60% while the average slopes are 5% to 15%. Soil drainage ranges from poor to excessive with more soils having poor drainage.

These soils currently have the potential to support a variety of plant and animal communities. Open land wildlife may include: rabbits, deer, quail, and pheasants; while woodland wildlife may include: deer, squirrel, turkey and birds. Wetland environments may support raccoon, muskrat, duck and geese populations (USDA 1967: 155). Plants ranging from grain and seed crops in open lands to hardwood and coniferous trees and shrubs in woodlands are well suited to these soils.

Within the study area approximately 5% is currently open land, 25% is woodland, and 5% is wetland. The remaining 65% is urban development.

There are a few problems associated with the soils found in the study area. The soils in the Beltsville series have a thick, very compact fragipan in the lower subsoil (USDA 1967: 16). They have only a moderate effective depth for agricultural purposes. Most of the previously mentioned soils are moderately to severely eroded and require special precautions if used agriculturally. Poor soil drainage is a problem for the urban complex within the study area and control measures are required for development (USDA 1967: 17). Permeable and acidic soils adversely effect preservation of organic and metallic remains except when sandy/clay spring soils are present, in which case concretion barriers are formed. These sandy/clay spring soils are present in the study area.

Soils will be further discussed in the section on physiographic provinces.

### Underlying Geology

The underlying geology of the study area consists of both crystalline and sedimentary rock. The Patuxent formation is the predominant sediment, followed by Brandywine gravel. Crystalline Laurel migmatite is present in a small portion of the study area and Wicomico sediments form a distinctive boundary for the area of study (map 4).

The Patuxent formation consists of large round pebbles, fine white, pink, or yellow sand and thin lenses of white or iron stained clay and kaolin. The sand beds commonly contain disseminated kaolin. This deposit which is 100 feet thick and is probably an outwash deposit from the Lower Cretaceous Epoch is found in the northeast and southwest of the study area.

Brandywine gravel consists of ancient alluvial fans sloping gently downward from an altitude of about 300 feet above sea level. This deposit which is about 40 feet thick dates from the Pliocene Epoch is located in the center and south of the study area.

Laurel migmatite is a crystalline rock of an unknown age. It is a composition of intensely granitized schist with impure granite (muscovite and biotite granite) and is located in the northwest and south within the study area.

The Wicomico formation consists of gravel, sand, and silt and has a thickness of about 30 feet. This deposit

dates from the Pleistocene Epoch and is not located within the study area but is found directly to the east of the B & O railroad tracks (Cooke 1951).

### Physiographic Boundaries and Features

The study area lies in a transition zone (the "Fall Line") between the physiographic provinces of the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont Plateau (map 5). Within the study area there are both river and stream environments and urban/residential tracts. The boundary between the Coastal Plain and Piedmont Plateau is ill defined, marked mainly by the termination of the softer Cretaceous formations and the beginnings of the harder crystalline rocks of the Piedmont Plateau (Vokes 1974: 39). In the stream valleys the softer strata have been eroded, leading to the development of rapids and waterfalls over the crystalline rocks of the Piedmont. The Fall Line, by causing this change in gradient of the Patuxent River, led to the use of water power in Laurel. The Fall Line's most characteristic feature is a change of sea level of 400 feet from the Montgomery County line to city limits of Laurel.

### Rivers and Streams

The Patuxent River, forming the northern boundary of the study area, is the longest river lying entirely within the state of Maryland (Corps of Engineers 1975: 5). It drains approximately 2486 square kilometers and is 175 kilometers in length (Steponaitis 1980: 2). The river has an underlying geology which includes formations of laurel migmatite in

the Piedmont province and Patuxent formation in the Coastal Plain area (Cooke 1951: Map). The two major soils along the river are Comus silt loam and Manor loam. Comus silt loam is a well drained fertile soil occurring on the flood plains and consists of sediments that have been washed from crystalline rocks of the Piedmont Plateau (USDA 1967: 28). Manor loam is a well drained soil that developed from materials weathered from highly micaceous rocks (USDA 1967: 45).

Streams within the study area, the Walker Branch and Crow Branch, form the western and southern boundaries, respectively. The Walker Branch soils are like those of the river. Banks of the Crow Branch consist of Bibb silt loam which is a deep, level, poorly drained soil (Vokes 1974: 19).

The river, streams and their banks currently have the potential to support a variety of plants and animals. Plants include: trees, such as oak, yellow-poplar, pines and spruce; and marsh vegetation such as cattail, water millet, river bulrush, spatterdock, and others. Animals may include: fish, raccoon, muskrat, duck and geese (USDA 1967: 155, 157).

Lithic resources such as stealtite, quartz, and quartzite deposits are exposed by the downcutting action of the Patuxent River (Steponaitis 1980: 3).

The river and stream network can be characterized as a system which is both ecologically diverse and rich in resources, surrounding and dissecting the study area.

### Coastal Plain Section

Of the study area, approximately 85%, the central and southeastern portion, lies within the Coastal Plain Province. The topography of this area is characterized by rolling uplands. The underlying rock formation differs in the west and east of the study area. The western half is underlain by Brandywine gravel, while the eastern half lies over the Patuxent formation. To the east of the B & O railroad the Coastal Plain is underlain by the Wicomico formation.

There are many different soils within the Coastal Plain in the area of study. Beltsville-Urban land complex makes up approximately 50% of the total, Leonardtown silt loam 25%, Beltsville fine sandy loam 15%, Hyde silt loam 5% and Ochoeckonee silt loam 5%. The Beltsville-Urban land complex consists of disturbed land that is composed mainly of Beltsville soils (USDA 1967: 18). These areas have been altered by community development. Beltsville fine sandy loam is a moderately well drained soil that developed from silty to sandy materials deposited by the wind (USDA 1967: 17). Leonardtown silt loam is a poorly drained, nearly level to gently sloping soil found on uplands of the Coastal Plain (USDA 1967: 44). Hyde silt loam consists of poorly drained soils that are dark in color and rich in organic materials that washed from silty or sandy uplands (USDA 1967: 53).

These soils presently have high potential for the

support of plant and animal communities. Plants may include: grain and seed crops, legumes and grasses, wild herbaceous upland plants, and hardwood trees and shrubs. Wildlife may include: rabbits, some deer, quail, pheasant, other upland birds, squirrel and turkey (USDA 1967: 156-161).

The section of the study area that lies within the Coastal Plain has the most fertile soils and therefore the most ecological potential for both wild and domesticated plants and animals.

#### Piedmont Section

The Northwest 15% of the study area lies within the Piedmont Plateau. Broad undulating surfaces, low knobs and ridges, and deep narrow stream valleys are characteristic of the Piedmont region. The underlying geology is crystalline Laurel migmatite and the Patuxent cutting through this formation exposes steatite, quartz and quartzite deposits (Steponaitis 1980: 3). There were important sources of raw material for both aboriginal and historical peoples of the area. Soils are almost entirely of the Manor variety previously mentioned. Flora in the Piedmont within the study area may include: trees such as yellow-poplar, pine and oak; wild herbaceous plants, and hardwood and coniferous shrubs. Fauna may include: rabbits, some deer, quail, pheasants, and other birds (USDA 1967: 156-161). The portion

of the study area that lies on the Piedmont Plateau is characteristically rich in resources, both lithic and ecological.

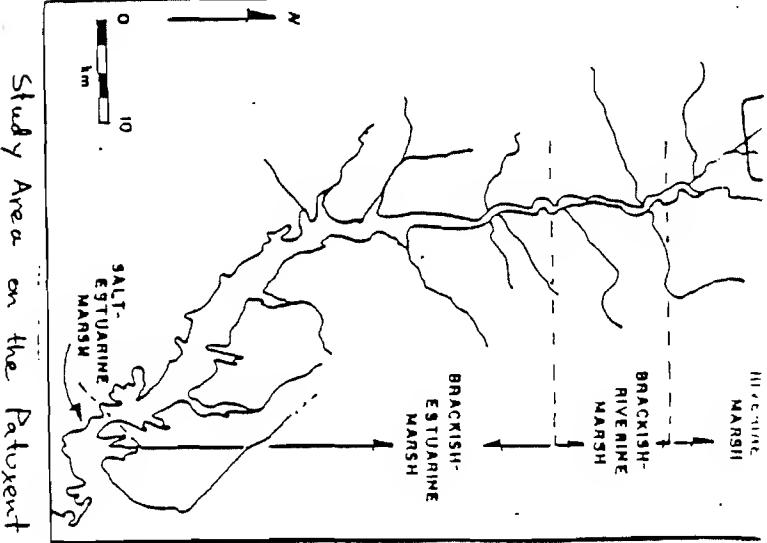
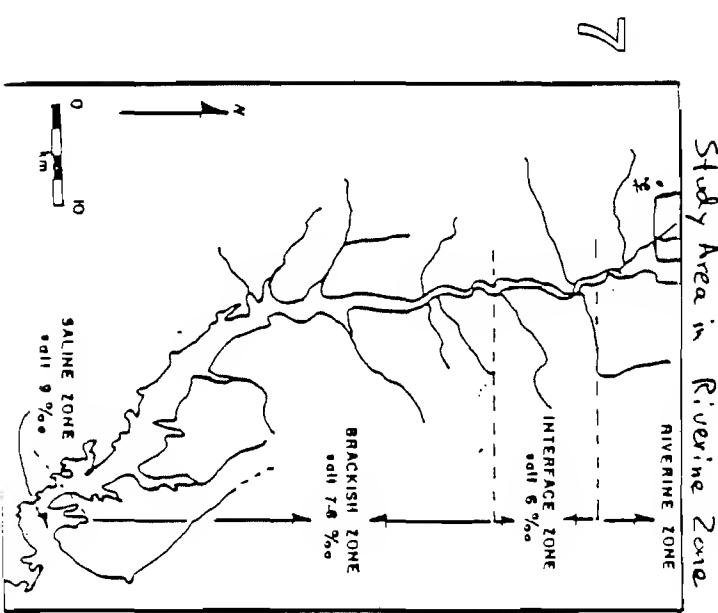
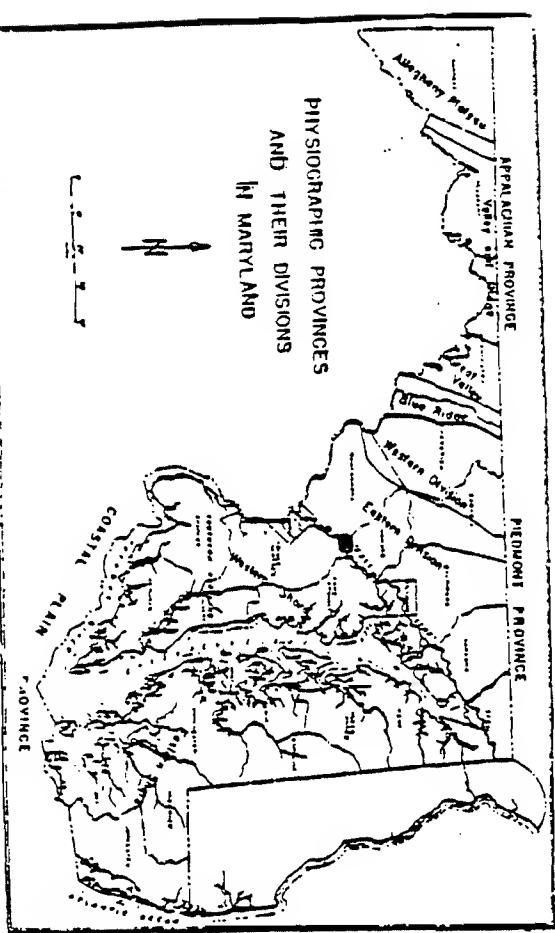
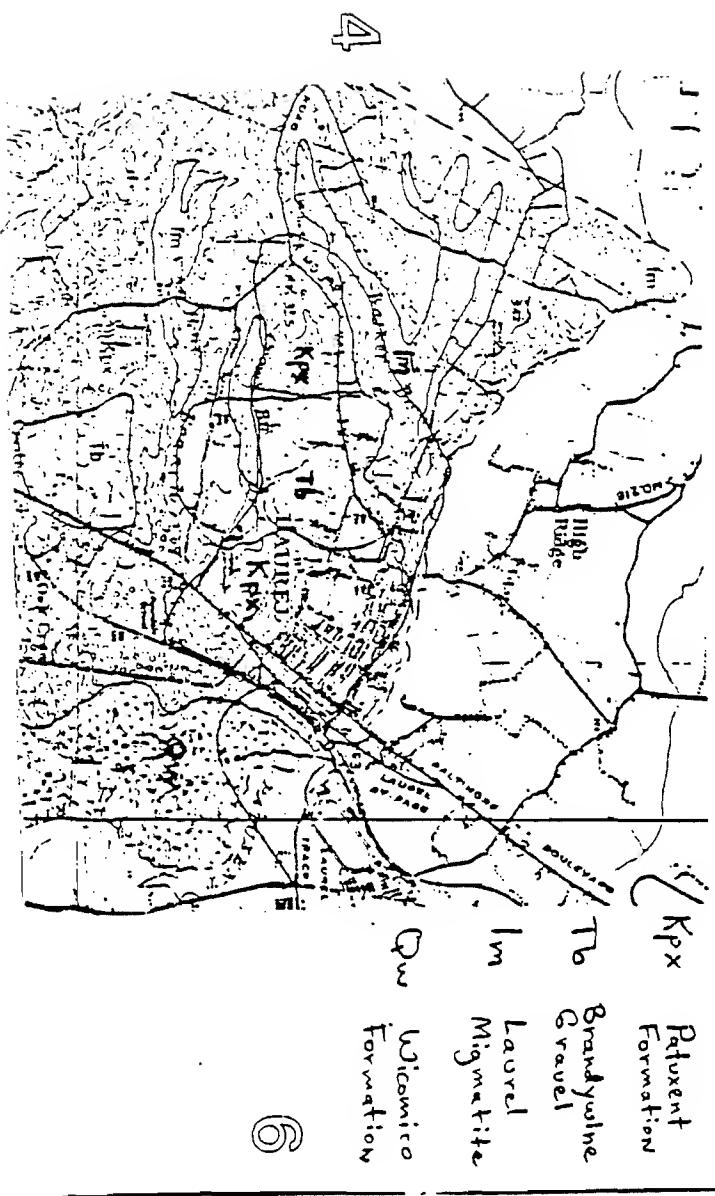
### Urban Area

A large part of the study area is currently utilized as a commercial, residential, and political district. Major thoroughfares include US Route 1, Maryland State Highways 198 and 216 and Main Street (map 1). Route 1 runs north to south in the eastern part of the study area. It is primarily a strip style service area with fast food restaurants, gasoline stations, banks, and convenience stores. It is a major transportation artery connecting Washington and Baltimore.

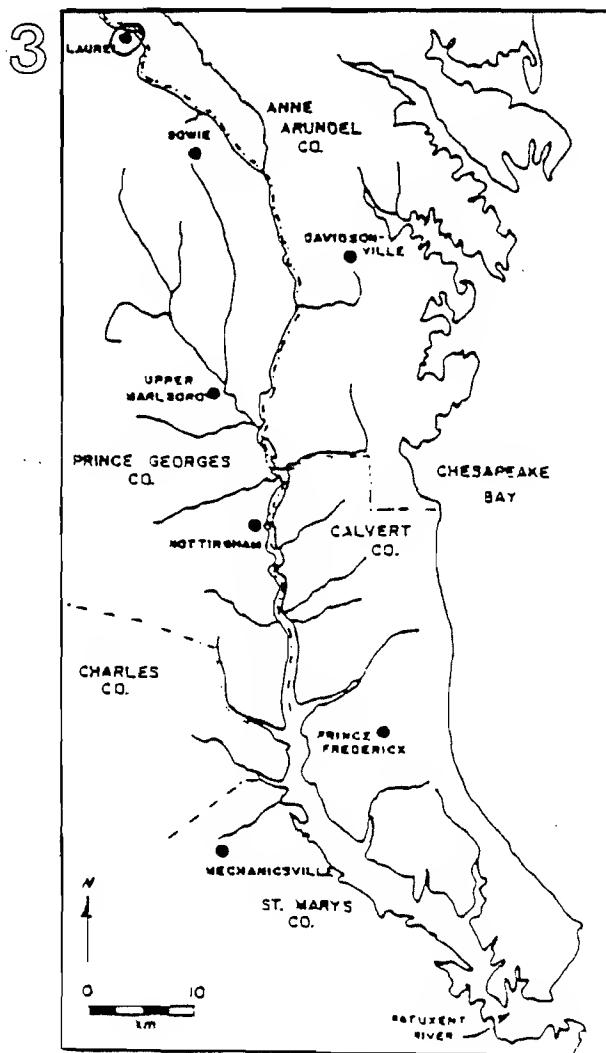
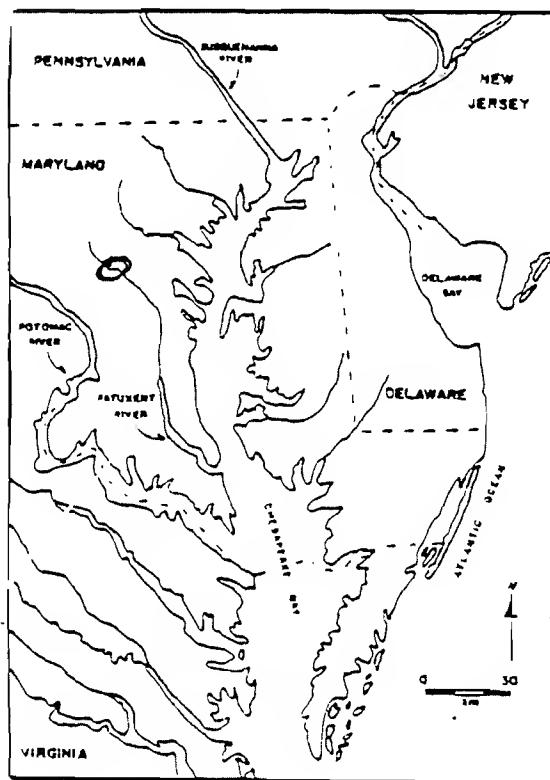
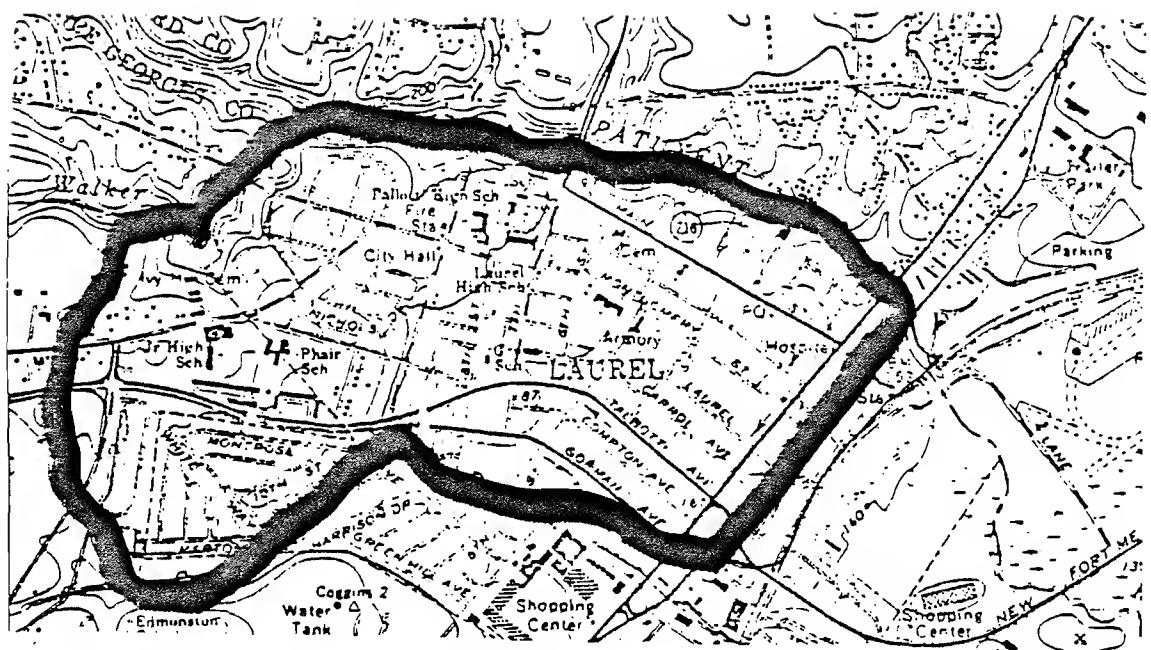
One ninety-eight, a divided highway, running east to west in the study area, crosses through the older residential area of Laurel, passing newer multifamily units and clusters of service oriented establishments. These major thoroughfares mirroring the framework of rivers and streams reflects Laurel's strategic location as a center of commerce in the Baltimore-Washington corridor and have influenced the development and growth of the study area attracting commerce while isolating and preserving the historic city.

Planning zones in Laurel reflect the internal historic development, urban diversification, and ecological

## Underlying Geology of the Study Area



Location of Study Area Physiographically



diversification of the study area. Divisions include West Laurel, Laurel, City of Laurel and North Laurel (map 10). West Laurel, located towards the west and southwest limits of the study area, is an expanding suburb of single family residences. North Laurel located on the northern banks of the Patuxent is composed of approximately 50% older scattered single family residences and 50% new suburban single family dwellings. City of Laurel lies to the south of the study area and is mainly a residential area dominated by multifamily units which have been designed as barriers to through traffic. Adjoining this planning zone is the Laurel Centre Mall, a specialized retail complex including some service businesses. Barriers such as cul-de-sacs and planned developments designed to hinder traffic flow are characteristic of the City of Laurel planning district.

The zone designated as "Laurel" is located between the Patuxent River and City of Laurel. This older portion of the city includes Main Street, the central business district, and civic offices. The streets here are in a grid pattern that was established in the 1800's and designed to promote accessibility.

Despite its obvious internal diversity the study area is currently perceived as a multifaceted unified whole which promotes functional, economic, artistic landscaping, architectural and political diversity and interaction.

## Prehistory of the Study Area

### Introduction

There are no officially recorded prehistoric sites in the study area. However, despite the absence of official documentation progress is being made to record and interpret a significant quantity of prehistoric materials which have been accurately provenienced to the study area. The closest area that has been surveyed is the Patuxent drainage by Steponaitis (1980). The occupation of the prehistoric populations is reflected by scattered artifacts traditionally associated with the following time periods: Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, Early Woodland, Middle Woodland, and Late Woodland. Collections containing such materials are only vaguely provenienced (map 9). Fields located adjacent to "Laurel Station" on the eastern edge of the study area have been described as "Indian fields" and fields located adjacent to power line right of ways and suburb developments in western Laurel have yielded surface collections. Collections from the central historic district are known to exist but have not yet been analyzed. Such collections appear to reflect a great range of diversity including a rich resource base in the study area which may still retain a high degree of integrity in places.

As a result there is a need for a more complete reconnaissance of the study area. Steponaitis' chronology

(1980) will be presented here along with some predictions as to where prehistoric sites could be found. The occurrence of casual finds will be generally described.

### Prehistoric Environment

Prior to cultural description for the prehistoric period, it is essential that prehistoric environments be described. Although speculative, such reconstructions have often aided in the interpretation of the prehistory of the area.

Climate during the Full Glacial period before 10,700 BC was cold to cool and wet in the Middle Atlantic States. The Patuxent drainage may have had an open spruce pine forest evolving into a closed boreal forest. Sloth, mastodon, mammoth, caribou, moose, bison, musk ox, and a variety of small mammals were present in both the Full and Late Glacial boreal zones (Steponaitis 1980: 6). The Late Glacial from 10,700 BC to 8500 BC was a time of warmer temperatures when glacial fauna was being replaced by modern species. Vegetation may have included spruce and pine with some deciduous trees. The pre-Boreal/Boreal climate episode lasted from 8500 BC to 6500 BC. Climate was cooler and drier and the forest was primarily deciduous with beech, hemlock, birch, and pine (Steponaitis 1980: 6).

The Atlantic episode, 6500 to 3000 BC, consisted of a warm, wet period (6500 - 4500 BC) and a warm dry period

(4500 - 3000 BC). Vegetation of the Patuxent drainage at this time was probably similar to that of today (Steponaitis 1980: 6). Warm dry temperature continued into the sub-Boreal episode which lasted from 3000 to 1000 BC. Patuxent drainage vegetation probably consisted of an oak-hickory forest with some coniferous trees (Steponaitis 1980: 7). The sub-Atlantic episode (1000 BC to present) is marked by cooler, wetter, more stable conditions. Patuxent drainage vegetation consisted of oak, chestnut, and hickory in the drier upland areas and sweetgum, poplar, and maple in the lowlands (Steponaitis 1980: 7).

The rise in sea level of one meter per century from 9,000 - 7,000 BC changed the Patuxent River from riverine in character, to riverine with a brackish estuarine water zone in the lower portion of the river. Between 7,000 - 1,000 BC sea level rose .3 meters per century and the river was inundated, enabling the development of estuarine and marine habitats (Steponaitis 1980: 7). From 1,000 BC onward the decrease of the sea level rise to 0.1 meter per century contributed to stabilization of the estuarine zone. Wetlands and habitats that produce estuarine and marine resources formed along the present saline and brackish water zones. With this process of inundation continuing, today the estuarine zone still is being pushed further upstream (Steponaitis 1980: 5) (maps 5, 6).

### Paleo-Indian Period

The Paleo-Indian tradition is generally thought to have lasted from approximately 10,000 to 8,500 BC. There are few Paleo-Indian sites within the Coastal Plain and artifacts are usually limited to fluted points. This paucity of artifacts may be a result of the sea level rise which was taking place at this time. Sites located at the lower reaches of the Patuxent may now be underwater (Steponaitis 1980: 18). A similar effect might be predicted for this study area.

Paleo-Indian sites may be identified by artifact finds such as fluted points, scrapers, bipolar tools, denticulates burins, choppers, knives and hammerstones. These artifacts would probably indicate sites thought to be base camps, quarry sites and processing stations (Steponaitis 1980: 19). Megafauna may have been the focus of hunting previous to 9000 BC when modern species appeared. The environment at this time would seem more suited to varied hunting and gathering activities.

The closest Paleo-Indian site to this study area is located downstream and adjacent to the river. Within the study area one should anticipate sites from this period in a variety of locations in reflection of the postulated diversified and ranging lifestyle of these peoples. Evidence for Paleo-Indian occupation has not been reported for the study area.

## Archaic Period

### Early Archaic

When the Early Archaic Period (7500 - 6000 BC) began, floral and faunal changes were taking place within the Patuxent drainage. Northern hardwood forests of oak, hemlock, beech and birch were replacing the mixed coniferous forest. Modern animal species were replacing the last of the Pleistocene fauna. During this time period gradual inundation occurred at the mouth and lower reaches of the Patuxent River (Steponaitis 1980: 19).

Two tool traditions mark this period: the Corner-Notched and the Bifurcate. The Corner-Notched point is associated with Early Archaic I (7500 - 7200 BC) and Early Archaic II (7200 - 6900 BC) and has the characteristics of corner-notching and blade serration. The materials used were usually quartzite or rhyolite but also used were quartz, chert, and jasper. Lack of rhyolite in the Patuxent area probably indicates the existence of trade networks or long journeys to rhyolite sources (Steponaitis 1980: 20). The Bifurcate tradition dating from 6900 - 6000 BC includes the phases of Early Archaic III, IV and V. Quartz and rhyolite were the most commonly used materials, with some quartzite and chert also being utilized. Artifacts include drills, knife scrapers, blades, hoes and hammerstones. There is no direct evidence from the Patuxent River area but data for the Middle Atlantic area suggests a hunting and gathering subsistence

strategy with scheduled use of resources seasonally available (Steponaitis 1980: 21).

The nearest Early Archaic sites to the study area are located downstream and at junctions of the Patuxent and its tributaries. Within the study area Early Archaic diagnostic artifacts may possibly be found at the junctions of the Patuxent and Walker Branch, or the Patuxent and Crow Branch. Present in local collections are: drills, knives, scrapers, and hammerstones dating from this period.

#### Middle Archaic

During the Middle Archaic period (6000 - 4000 BC), the climate changed from pre-Boreal/Boreal to that of the Atlantic episode (6500 - 3000 BC). At this time the flora and fauna of the Patuxent drainage was similar to that of today (Steponaitis 1980: 6). The Middle Archaic is subdivided into three phases.

Little evidence exists from Middle Archaic I (6500 - 5000 BC) in the Patuxent drainage area. It is suggested that cultural factors led to depopulation or that the bifurcate tradition lasted longer here (Steponaitis 1980: 23).

The Middle Archaic II dating from 5000 to 4200 BC is represented by Morrow Mountain stemmed point types. Raw materials include rhyolite and quartz, with some quartzite, chert and slate reflecting an increased use of non-local materials (Steponaitis 1980: 23). Artifacts that would indicate sites from this period include: scrapers, large

bifaces, choppers, and fully groomed axes.

There is little evidence concerning settlement patterns and subsistence activities for Middle Archaic II. Opinions differ on whether anadromous fishes were utilized at this time. The nearest sites to the study area are occupation sites by inland swamps, and transitory camps located along second or third order streams (Steponaitis 1980: 23).

Middle Archaic III (4200 - 4000 BC) is represented by Guilford Lanceolate points which were made almost exclusively from quartzite, a local material. The tool kit associated with this phase resembles that of Middle Archaic II. Nearest sites to the study area are located in similar areas to that of Middle Archaic II (Steponaitis 1980: 23).

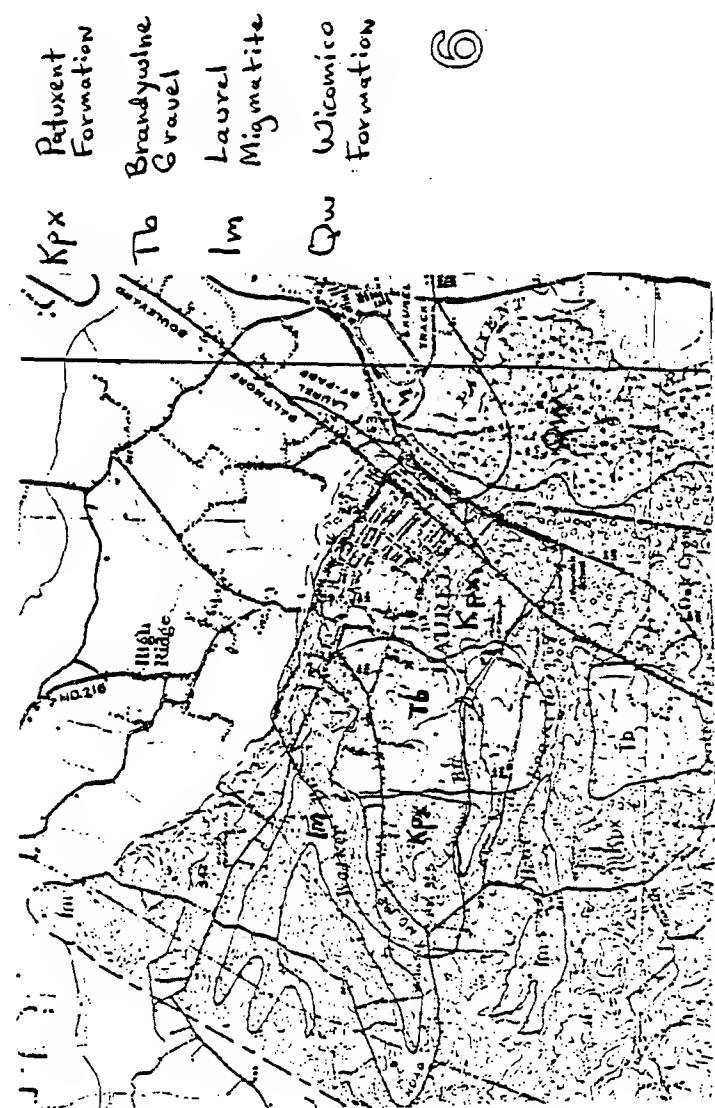
Artifacts from Middle Archaic I and II are present in Laurel collections. Middle Archaic II sites may possibly be found along the Walker and Crow Branches or near the swamps directly east of the study area.

#### Late Archaic

The climate was warm and dry during the Late Archaic period which lasted from 4000 to 1000 BC. Vegetation of this period was probably dominated by an oak-hickory forest. Continued inundation allowed the use of estuarine resources at the lower portion of the Patuxent River and anadromous fish runs probably began at this time (Steponaitis 1980: 24).

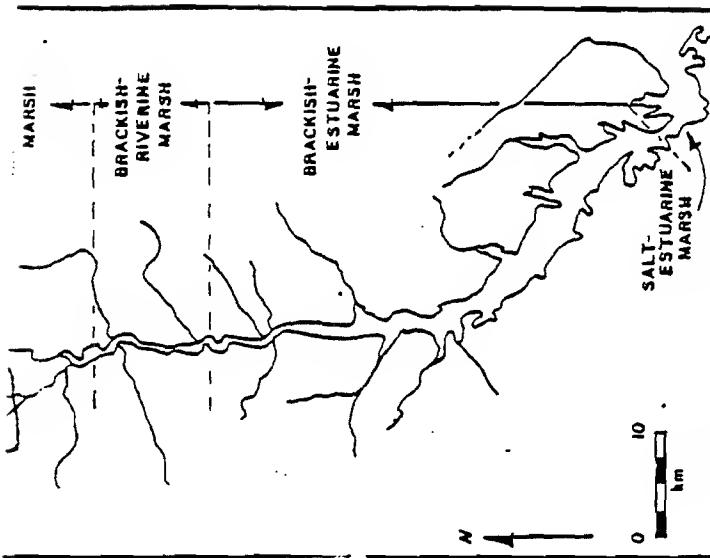
Late Archaic I (4000 - 3000 BC) is marked by the Piscataway point with quartz as the most commonly used raw

## Underlying Geology of the Study Area



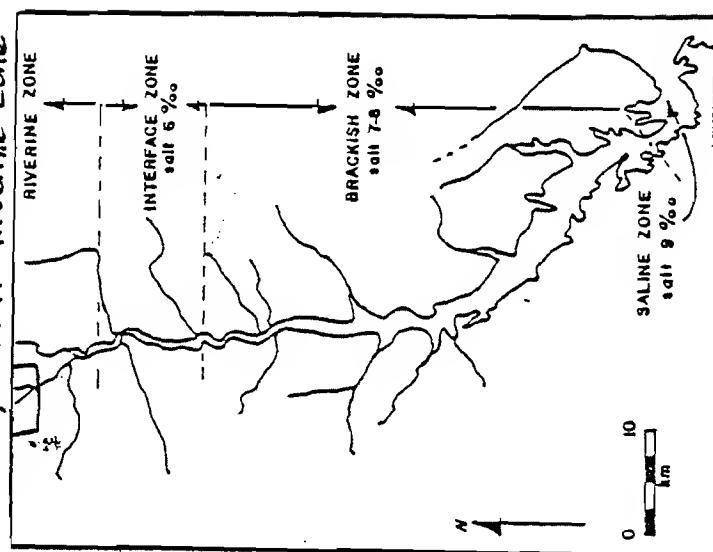
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MARSI



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### Study Area on the Patuxent



1

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES  
AND THEIR DIVISIONS  
IN MARYLAND

APPALACHIAN PROVINCE

PIEDMONT PROVINCE

COASTAL PLAIN PROVINCE

Valley and Ridge

Blue Ridge

Western Mountain

Eastern Mountain

Coastal Plain

Atlantic Coastal Plain

Susquehanna River

Potomac River

James River

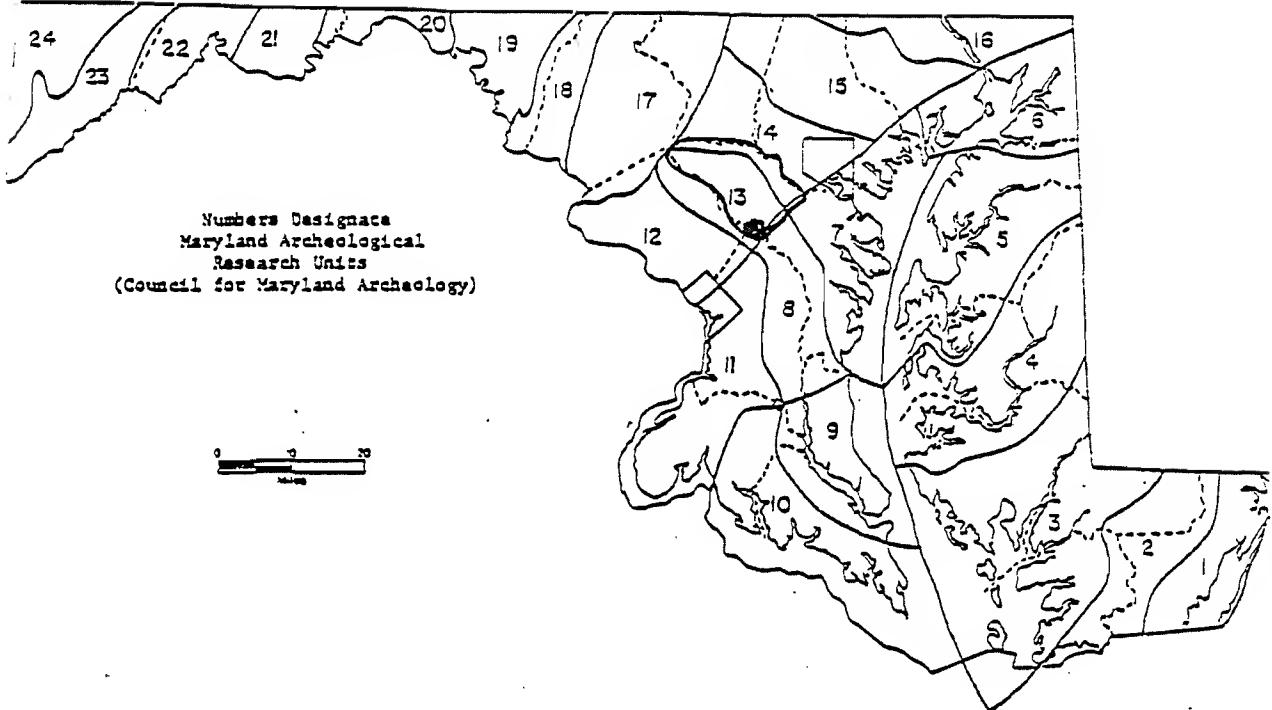
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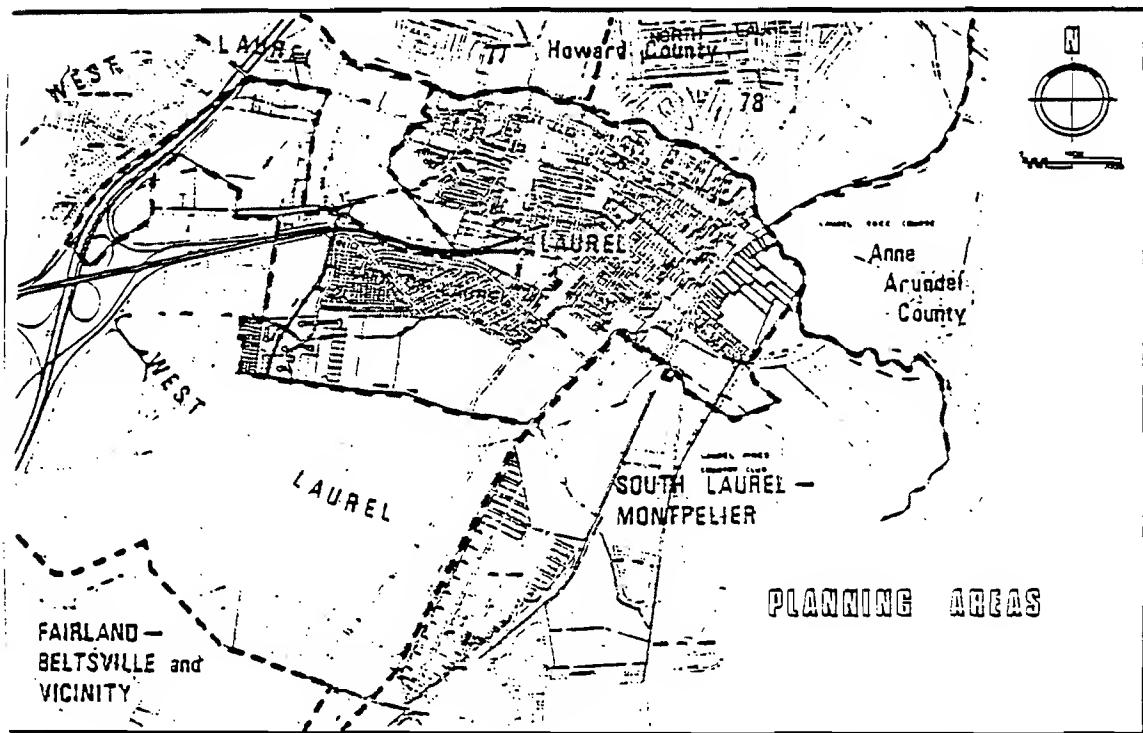
PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES  
AND THEIR DIVISIONS  
IN MARYLAND

## Location of Study Area Physiographically

12



10



material (Steponaitis 1980: 24). Sites dating from this time and near the study area can be found by the river, second and third order streams, and swamp areas (Steponaitis 1980: 25). Possibly Late Archaic I sites could be found along the Walker or Crow Branches or to the east of the study area where swamps are located. The Piscataway point is well represented in local collections from the West Laurel, Riding Stable Road area.

The Late Archaic III phase (2200 - 1900 BC) is represented by the Holmes point, usually of quartzite. Artifacts associated with this phase include knives, drills, pestles, celts, hammerstones, milling stones, banner stones, pitted stones and net sinkers (Steponaitis 1980: 26).

The nearest known Late Archaic I and II sites to the study area are located on the river and its tributaries and once again sites may and do exist in similar locations within the study area.

The Broadspear tradition (Late Archaic IV and V) is defined by the presence of steatite bowls and broad bladed points that may have been used for fishing. A riverine settlement orientation may have developed at this time (Steponaitis 1980: 26).

In the Patuxent drainage the Late Archaic IV (1900 - 1700 BC) is indicated by 2 point types. They are the Savannah River Stemmed manufactured from quartzite or rhyolite and Koens-Crispin points of quartzite, rhyolite, and quartz.

Some steatite was available from quarries in Laurel (Steponaitis 1980: 26).

There are two point types associated with Late Archaic V (1700 - 1500 BC). Perkiomen Broadspear and Susquehanna Broadspear are usually of rhyolite or quartz. Sites from these phases tend to be located near the river or its major tributaries (Steponaitis 1980: 26).

Although steatite is not found in local collections, this may be due to collector bias rather than absence of the artifacts. Collectors are usually more interested in "arrowheads" than steatite bowls. Local collections from the study area reflect an abundance of Archaic artifacts indicating the possible presence of significant sites within the study area.

### Woodland Period

#### Early Woodland

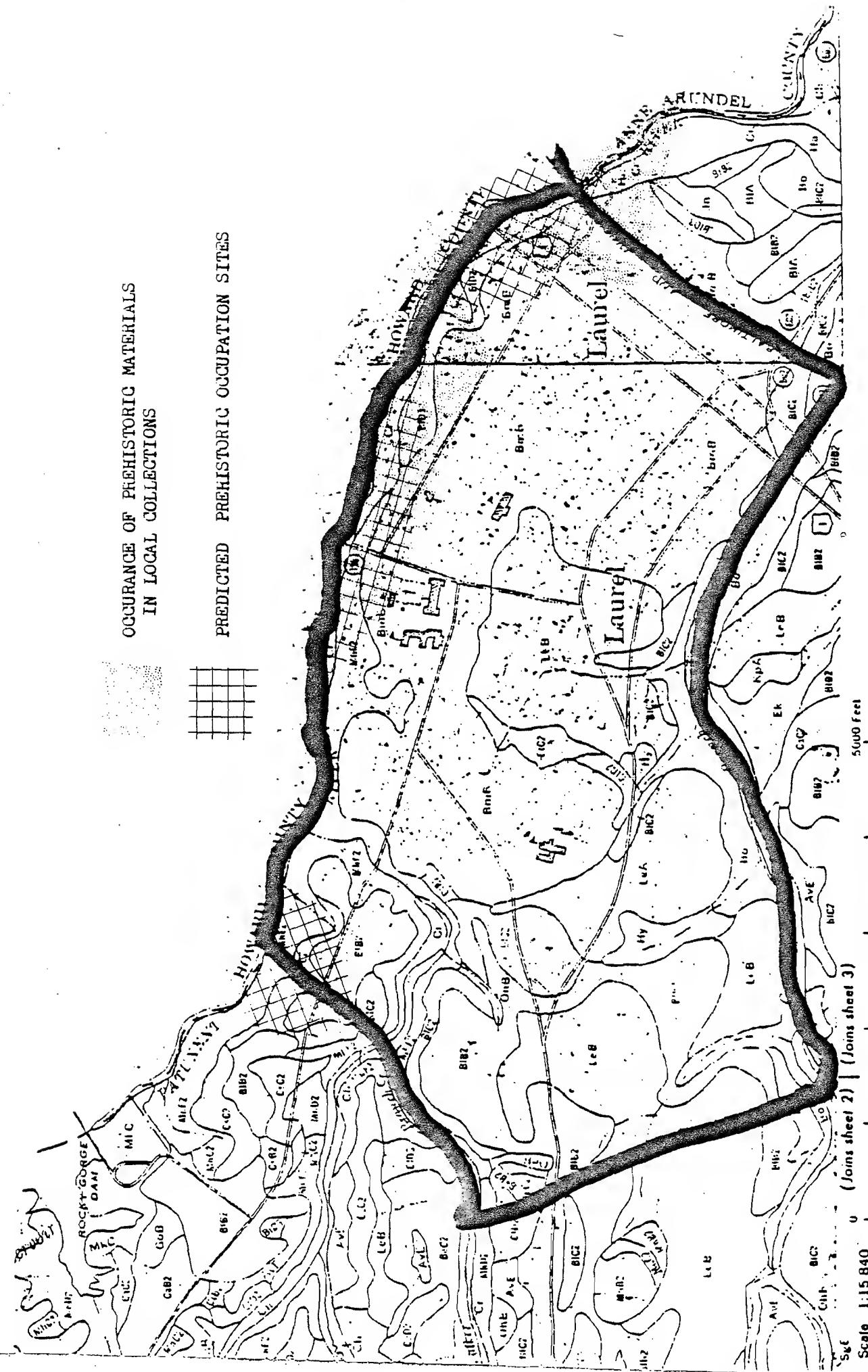
Today's milder, wetter climate had its beginnings in the Early Woodland Period. At this time the flora and fauna present today were established. The sea level was rising slower but continued to move the estuarine habitat upstream (Steponaitis 1980: 28).

The Fishtail tradition (1500 - 750 BC) is indicated by Orient fishtail points commonly of quartzite and Dry Brook points also of quartzite. Marcey Creek Plain pottery was being produced at this time. This ware was steatite tempered,

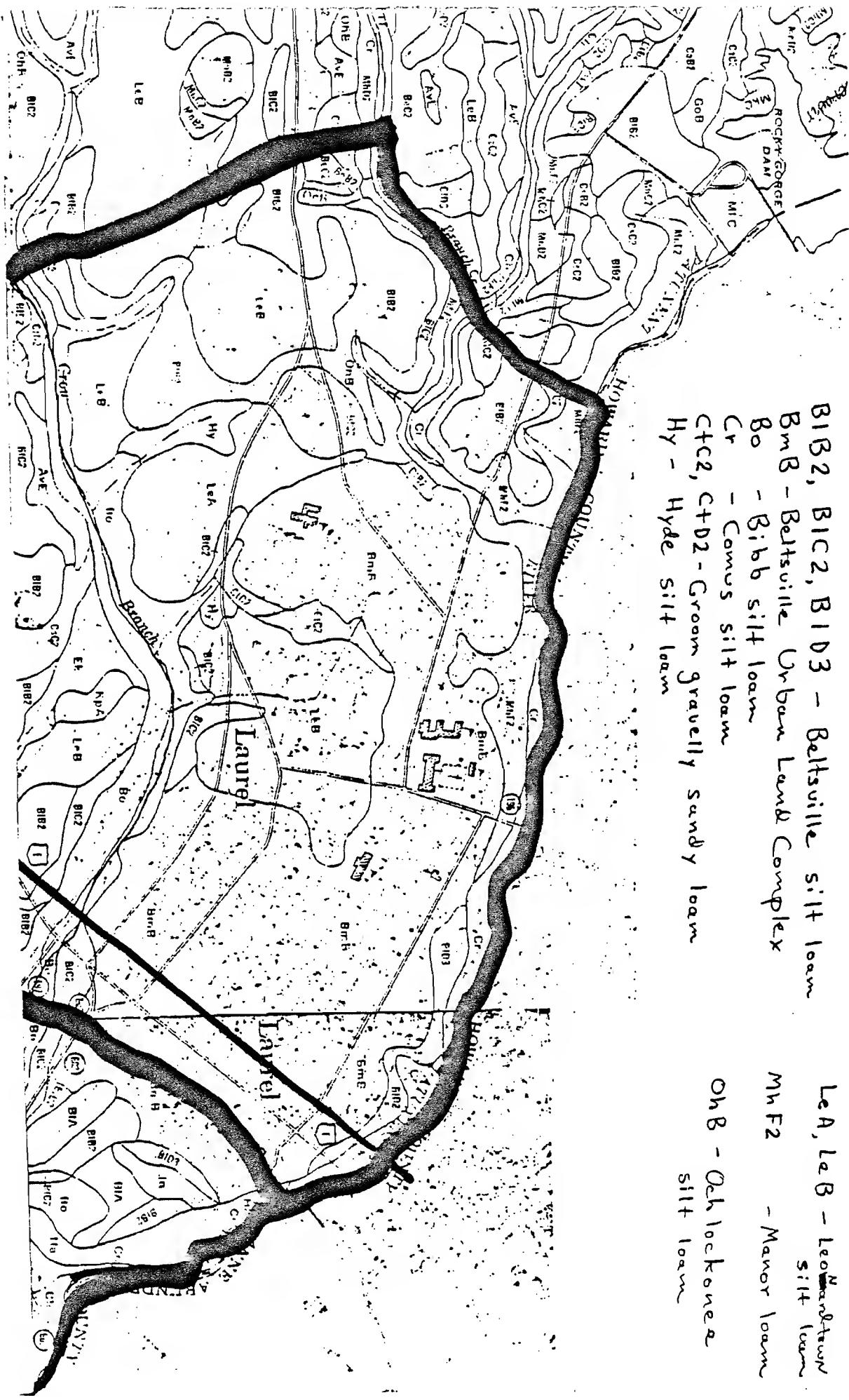
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OCCURRENCE OF PREHISTORIC MATERIALS  
IN LOCAL COLLECTIONS

## PREDICTED PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION SITES



## Soils within the Study Area



undecorated and grey to tan in color. Settlement pattern tends to continue to be riverine in orientation (Steponaitis 1980: 28).

The Accokeek phase (750 - 400 BC) is marked by Accokeek Cord-Marked pottery which has a friable paste, crushed quartz temper, is red in color, with exterior surfaces of fine cord-wrapped paddle impressions. Calvert points, usually of quartz, are common in the Patuxent drainage. This phase may have seen a more sedentary settlement pattern with use of a wide range of resources (Steponaitis 1980: 29).

Many known sites are located near the study area along the river and its tributaries. Early Woodland sites may be anticipated along the Patuxent River, Walker Branch, and Crow Branch. Once again, collector bias may be the reason why Early Woodland pottery is not found in collections of the study area. Stone artifacts from this period have been found in the study area.

#### Middle Woodland

The ceramic type associated with the Popes Creek phase (400 BC - 200 AD) is the Popes Creek Net Impressed. It is red to reddish tan in color, friable and undecorated, with net impressed exteriors and scored interiors. The Rossville point of the phase was usually manufactured from quartz or quartzite. Other items of the tool kit probably included knives, axes, pestles, grinding stones, mortars, choppers, hammerstones and bone awls.

Settlement patterns tend to reflect an estuarine orientation. Useful resources included oyster, waterfowl, fish, deer, squirrel, beaver, turtle, catfish, sturgeon and freshwater mussel (Steponaitis 1980: 30).

The ceramic type of the Selby Bay phase (AD 200 - 800) is Mockley ware which is thick, tempered with ground shell, and has a clayey paste. Surface treatments include net impressed, cord-marked and plain. Selby Bay points are almost always of rhyolite. The probable tool assemblage for this period included: bone awls, stemmed scrapers, bifacially retouched rhyolite flakes, three quarter grooved axes and two holed gorgets.

Resources known to have been utilized during this period include deer, beaver, tortoise, turtle, turkey, oysters, walnuts, clams, and freshwater mussels. If cultigens were used at this time, their use left no evidence. Settlement patterns reflect the availability of resources with populations aggregating and dispersing accordingly throughout the year (Steponaitis 1980: 31).

The nearest Middle Woodland sites to the study area are located on the banks of the Patuxent River and its tributaries. Sites from the period may exist in the several similar locations within the area of study.

#### Late Woodland

The Little Round Bay phase (AD 800 - 1250) has associated with it two ceramic types. They are Rappahannock

Incised and Rappahannock Fabric-Impressed with decorative motifs that include: triangles, filled triangles, triangles filled with parallel lines, stepped lines, lines placed parallel to the rim and nested rectangles. Points used at this time include Jacks Reef Pentagonal points commonly of quartz and rhyolite, Jack Reef Corner-Notched points of quartz and Levanna points of quartz, chert and quartzite. Sites dating from this phase are located in a variety of environmental zones. It has been suggested that cultigens became more important during this phase (Steponaitis 1980: 32).

In the Patuxent drainage several ceramic variations mark the Sullivan Cove phase (AD 1250 - 1600). They are: Rappahannock Incised with bands of horizontal incisions parallel to the vessel lip, Townsend Corded-Horizontal with bands of cord marking parallel to the vessel lip, and Sullivan ware made from compact fine tempered paste with fine cord marking. Madison points usually of quartz also appear in this phase (Steponaitis 1980: 32, 33). The Sullivan Cove phase may have seen the advent of larger villages and some sedentism. Cultigens were more important at this time, but wild resources were used when available (Steponaitis 1980: 34).

These narrowly defined culture types have not been observed in the study area. However, their occurrence may be expected due to the postulated environmental diversity of these peoples.

### Post Contact Period

Information for the post contact period is not specific for the study area. However, a discussion of historic cultures of the general region will be provided here. The information available is usually from European written accounts which were culturally biased and not always first-hand accounts (Wilke 1980: 24).

Nearly 200 villages of Algonquian speakers were known to live on the Eastern and Western Shores of the Chesapeake Bay. They had permanent villages along the Bay, tributary rivers, and intersections of these waterways. A large amount of territory and a large number of these groups composed the Powhatan Confederacy. The Patuxent River Algonquians were grouped closely together as a result of hostile relations with the Iroquois. The Iroquois groups, such as the Susquehannocks, had permanent villages of agriculturists living in river valleys of the Susquehanna River (Wilke 1980: 24). At time of contact an estimate for the population of these tribes and others of the general area is 12,000 persons. Population decreased rapidly due to diseases introduced by the Europeans and warfare with Europeans and between tribes (Feest 1978: 246).

Although there are no written accounts of Indian occupation in the study area, artifacts are present in local collections and Laurel has not been extensively studied historically as have other areas.

## Historic Laurel

### Introduction

For purposes of this discussion the history of Laurel will be divided into eight periods:

Manorial	1658 - 1824
Creative Development	1824 - 1834
Entrepreneur Enculturation	1834 - 1840
Economic Flux	1840 - 1850
Industrial Experimentation	1850 - 1865
Inevitable City	1865 - 1874
Road to Suburbia	1874 - 1890
Our Town	1890 - 1950

Each period will be defined below, and a brief chronology of events listed, and a statement of how each period changed Laurel will be provided. These periods are conventionally defined for the purposes of discussion and are in part speculative. They are subject to further testing archeologically, anthropologically, and historically, yet they closely adhere to traditional historical accounts.

### Manorial 1658 - 1824

This period represents the first European habitation on record for the study area. In 1658 the land that was to become Laurel was owned by Richard Snowden who had been given 12,260 acres in the form of a Colonial Manorial land grant

(Clark 1896). The land was to be used for purposes of iron mining and agricultural development (map 16).

Specific events in this period include:

1658 - Richard Snowden, immigrant, obtains patent for New Birmingham plantation.

1736 - Richard Snowden "the Ironmaster" established the Patuxent Iron Works Company and the Snowden Iron Works, about two miles from the present site of Laurel, which was operated until 1750, (D'Marr 1978, Clark 1896).

1781 - Stagecoach line came near Laurel (Clark 1896).

1800 - Mention of industry to east of city (Clark 1896).

1802 - Snowden-Capron house constructed (D'Marr 1978).

1803 - Death of Major Thomas Snowden, 30,000 acres divided by five survivors (D'Marr 1978).

1808 - Baltimore-Washington turnpike and covered bridge completed (Clark 1896).

1811 - Nicholas Snowden built grist mill that was surrounded by "rude huts and log cabins" (Clark 1896).

1816 - Four stagecoach lines passed through daily. Records of the first inn, Half-way House, later called Milstead's Hotel (Clark 1896).

During this time Laurel saw an increase in population, improvement of trade routes, and the development of light industry. Laurel was at this time a crossroads town of scattered houses, supported by minimal service facilities,

growing up in the neighborhood of a politically and economically important Manorial seat. The dominance of agriculture over iron ore production is reflected by grist mill activities and records of large grain shipments for export via Elkridge Landing (Clark 1896).

#### Creative Development 1824 - 1834

During this short period the manorial system began a transformation into a more flexible system involving leasing, with resulting experiments in industry, but without significant capitalization.

Specific events during this time of creative development include:

1824 - Grist mill leased to William Johnson who converted it to a cotton factory with 100 employees for a period of 12 years (Clark 1896).

1830 - Record of an eight year lease from Nicholas Snowden to John Watson and Company that mentions cotton factory, grist mill, saw mill, house and 50 acres of land (D'Marr 1978).

1831 - Nicholas Snowden died leaving mill and land to widow and 12 children to be divided in absence of a will (D'Marr 1978).

The atmosphere of political and economical flux and opportunity, kindled by the intestate death of Nicholas Snowden, was built in this period by the labors of entre-

preneur lease holders; who through experimentation with the developing technology assembled the technological infrastructure around which a commercially viable mill community could grow.

#### Entrepreneur Enculturation 1834 - 1840

During these years the mill was transformed from an innovative experiment to a business and money-making speculative venture. Laurel reached out to regional markets and complex economic relationships developed. Local markets became overshadowed by regional concerns, leaving local consumers largely unaffected.

Events of this period include:

1834 - Horace Capron married Louisa Snowden and later acquired the mill properties, renamed "Patuxent Manufacturing Company" (D'Marr 1978).

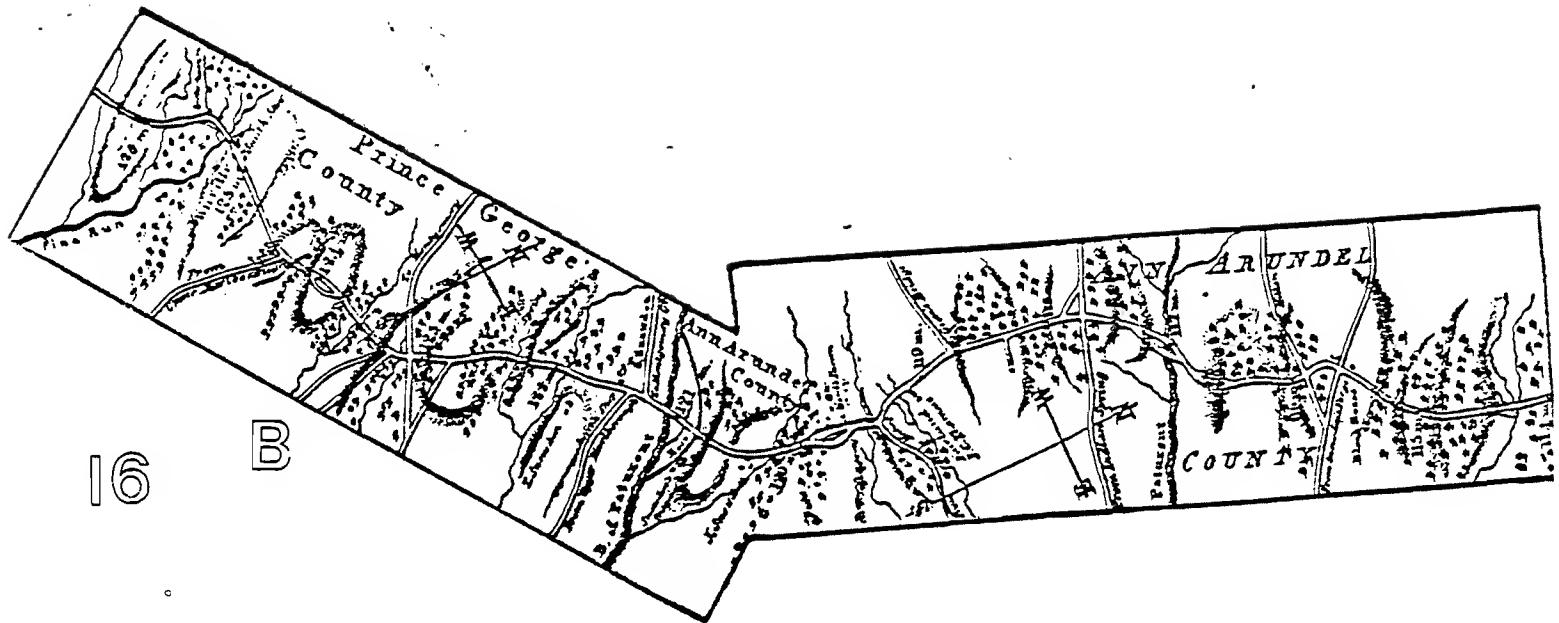
1835 - B & O railroad tracks were laid in Laurel (D'Marr 1978).

1836 - Patuxent Manufacturing Company made and sold cotton, iron, and other articles. Shares were sold--2,000 at \$100 each. Sixty thousand yards of cotton were produced weekly. The company was ruled by a committee of: Horace Capron, Edward Snowden, Theodore Jenkins, W.C. Shaw, A.E. Hall and O.C. Tiffany (D'Marr 1978).

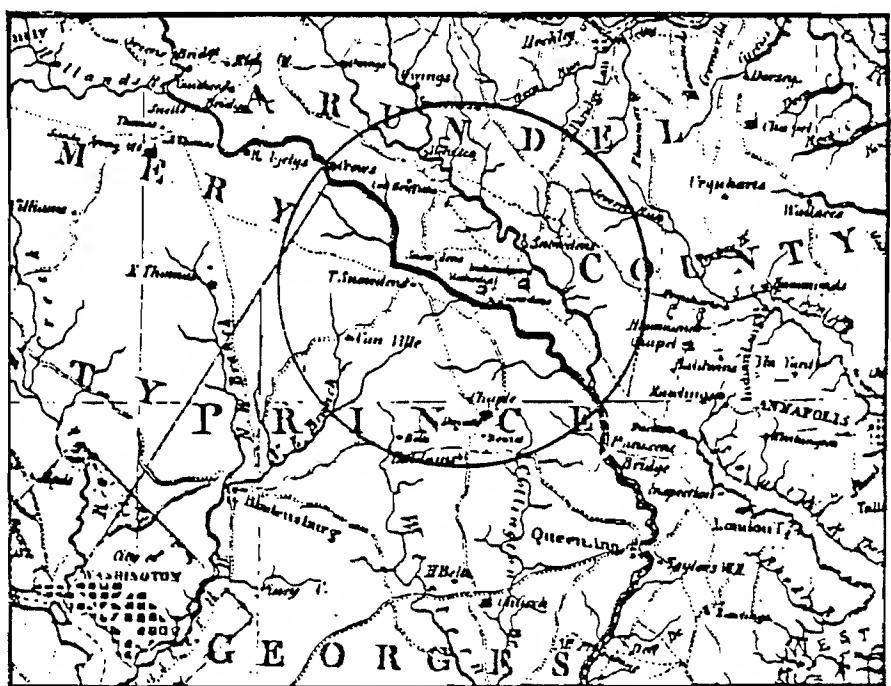
1835 - Horace Capron begins to spend large sums of money for fertilizer to create a model farm, which negatively impacted his other interests and drew criticism from the local community.

16

B



A





1837 - Post office opened and named "Laurel Factory,"  
Edward Snowden was postmaster (Chamber of Commerce  
1931).

1839 - Episcopal church founded (Clark 1896).

1840 - Laurel population up to an estimated 2000 (D'Marr 1978).

At the end of this period the mill was being managed by a committee of wealthy speculators. Population of Laurel increased, industrial support industries employed many people, and more buildings were constructed. Laurel became involved in regional markets and lost its "homegrown" leadership to capitalists more interested in pursuits such as agriculture (Capron) and transportation (Tiffany).

#### Economic Flux 1840 - 1850

During this time the mill management became patronizing, perhaps in an attempt to legitimize their position of dominance within the community, and to mask the real relationships between mill management and the work force. While concealing the precarious place of Laurel's industry in the regional market, they were able to make Laurel more attractive to both worker and capitalist.

Specific events that took place during this time were:

1840 - Assembly Hall built in Gothic style (D'Marr 1978).

1841 - Brick school built behind future site of Methodist church (D'Marr 1978).

1842 - Methodist church built in Classical Revival style by

Henry Snowden with a grant from the Patuxent Company. St. Mary's Catholic Church was built in Modified Georgian style by Dr. Theodore Jenkins (D'Marr 1978).

1843 - James Gary constructed a building at 707 Main Street in Industrial Modified Georgian style, the lease from Capron was for 99 years (D'Marr 1978).

1844 - The Avondale Mill, built in the style of Classical Revival and Georgian Industrial, was a cotton mill with 1,500 spindles; later a grist mill (D'Marr 1978).

1845 - Main Street macadamized for the first time by Peter Gorman. Houses on Avondale Street constructed (D'Marr 1978).

1846 - A four-story machine shop, a branch of the main mill was constructed and employed 100 men to produce mill factory parts (D'Marr 1978).

1847 - Telegraph lines go through Laurel (Poe 1978). St. Philip's Episcopal church built in English Country Gothic style by Horace Capron (D'Marr 1978).

1849 - Dr. Jenkins gave 69 acres to Georgetown College. Death of Louise Snowden Capron. Horace Capron, now bankrupt, left Laurel and eventually went to Japan to become known as the "father of Japanese agriculture." (D'Marr 1978).

As this era ended social class distinctions became more pronounced. The city was growing although without diversification and Main Street as a strong service and business

district was created. Large land holdings were split up for sale, rent, or investment as the leading businessmen diversified their business activities. The selection of classic architectural styles and their adoption without evidence of synthesis or transformations may represent the selection of style as symbol rather than the functional reflection of style as cultural expression. With the emergence of Laurel's cityscape's identity, the image of the inevitable city competes with that of the mill and industry may mirror economic and political reality.

#### Industrial Experimentation 1850 - 1865

During this period investors brought new industry and industrial modifications into the city. This set up a precedent for the continuation of the city as an industrial/residential mix.

Events during this period were:

1849 - O.C. Tiffany bidden for troubled mill and acquired the property (D'Marr 1978).

1850 - Patuxent Company ends (D'Marr 1978).

Talbott Mansion constructed.

1855 - Cotton factory destroyed by fire and was rebuilt with modifications.. Avondale Mill was converted to a grist mill (D'Marr 1978).

1860 - Tapscott House, a bakery, was constructed on Main Street (D'Marr 1978). Oddfellows Hall was constructed.

1861 - Martinet Map (map 11) (Harrison 1931).

Community organization was reflected by the Odd-fellows, and development of residential properties highlighted community diversification and identity.

#### The Inevitable City 1865 - 1874

During this period it became inevitable that Laurel would become a city apart from the mill. But its direction remained dynamically uncertain (map 11).

Events during these years were:

1865 - Georgetown College sold Jenkin's land for development (D'Marr 1978).

1866 - St. Mary's ceases as a Jesuit mission (St. Mary's Church 1976).

1868 - Elementary school built (Poe 1978).

Laurel Building Association established.

1869 - Masons chartered (Poe 1978).

1870 - Mill operation suspended, town incorporated (D'Marr 1978).

1870 - Lock-up and animal pound established, dog ordinances enacted (Gilbert 1931).

With the mill closed transportation became more important than water power for commuters, as well as for businesses dependent upon the regional market. This period sees the struggles of diversified industry participating in a volatile regional economy. These industries appear to

compete with the inevitable city for dominance of a sense of place. With their ties closer to regional rather than local markets, Laurel's diversified industry may have neglected that tie which could have safeguarded its role in the eventual incorporated town. This may be reflected by the later disappearance of such businessmen from civic government and their replacement by suburban resident commuters.

#### Road to Suburbia

The post civil war period saw Laurel develop into a suburb within the Baltimore-Washington corridor. In this way the community's relationship to material culture became independent of the constraints of specific market-places and more dependent on regional economic trends and income levels. Developing retail services distributed an expanding supply of goods (map 13).

Events of this period include:

- 1874 - Issue of first building permit. Laurel Building Supply opened. Diven Foundary at 347 Main Street established by WTS Diven (P.G. County Records).
- 1875 - Post office now known as Laurel (Chamber of Commerce 1931).
- 1876 - C.F. Shaffer and Edward Phelps opened a general store, which was eventually upgraded to a mail order house, at 906 Montgomery Street (Murphy 1979).

1878 - Hopkin's map of Laurel (map 13).

1879 - Academy of Music, social center built (D'Marr 1978).

1884 - "The Free Quill", Laurel newspaper published (Clark 1896).

1886 - The mill existed but did not operate. Machinery included 252 looms and 8,408 spindles. It's hall, store and 19 houses last described as intact in this year (St. Mary's Church 1976).

1888 - Laurel Mills forecloses and becomes Laurel Company (P.G. County Records).

1889 - Flood takes away covered bridge, iron bridge built (SMC 1976).

Diversified industry begins to decline as an element in Laurel's development. The development of suburbia reflected a control of sense of place as well as the relationship of the community to the regional market. The sense of place was no longer that of a busy mill town, or an industrial center, but that of a peaceful suburb competing in the regional market place for residents whose taxes would support the operation of civic government.

Post Civil War Laurel saw the expansion and settlement by department clerks working in D.C. Public civic structures were constructed by new residents who were eager to found new and diverse businesses. These developments encouraged a diversified town with a broad based economy.

## Our Town 1890 - 1950

As a growing city Laurel's prosperity rested in the building industry and as a "spa" suburb, which offered optional country homes rather than permanent residences to workers of Baltimore and Washington. This "resort" sense of place was not securely anchored by either local industry or bedroom suburb function (maps 14, 15).

Events at this time included:

1890 - City re-incorporated, has a mayor and nine city councilmen (Harrison 1931). National bank built (Chamber of Commerce 1931).

1891 - Phelps and Shaffer opened department store at 9th and Montgomery (Murphy 1979).

1892 - St. Phillip's Church enlarged (D'Marr 1978).

1894 - Records of first street railroad (Murphy 1979).

Masonic Hall built (Poe 1978). Laurel directory lists city residents.

1897 - First Sanbourne maps (map 14). Phelps was mayor, roads and sidewalks repaired (Clark 1896). Emergence of the urban land complex.

1899 - Laurel Co. sells to Mt. Vernon Woodbury cotton duck company (P.G. County Records).

1900 - Laurel's population up to an estimated 2,500 (CMP 1961: 6).

1902 - Washington and Berwyn Electric Railroad offered commuters lower fares than the B & O Railroad

(CMP 1961: 6). Laurel nightrobe factory established. Telephone exchange system installed. Three steel bridges now cross the Patuxent (Poe 1978).

1905 - Coggins and Deweese established Laurel sanitarium (Chamber of Commerce 1931).

1911 - Maryland State Fair Association launched horse racing at the Laurel Race Track which boosted the local economy (CMP 1961: 6).

1912 - Diven Foundary closes (Land Records).

1917 - Mill is vacant and used to house soldiers awaiting the construction of Ft. Meade (Poe 1978).

1921 - Mill sold to industrial power co. (Land Records).

1925 - Trolley line closed (Poe 1978).

1928 - Concrete sidewalks were constructed (Harrison 1931).

1929 - Gas service came to Laurel (CMP 1961: 6).

1931 - Almost all streets in Laurel paved (Harrison 1931).

1940 - Laurel mill torn down (D'Marr 1978).

As a suburb trading in residents and a city in its own right, Laurel develops civic amenities and sense of place at the expense of success in the regional marketplace. Businesses growing at this period are service oriented, and diversified industries continue to diminish in importance.

Following the failure of the spa concept, Laurel is overwhelmed by the demands for suburban/commuter housing, and toward the end of the period seeks recreation industries and city improvements to attract a stable residential population. Funneling this new demand for space into inappropriate housing

stock configuration, and the resultant deterioration and obsolescence which it created, reveals the city's dedication to the concept of "Inevitable City," continuing into this period. Laurel has only recently began to improve on this situation by capitalizing on sense of place and by attracting new industrial and technological regional businesses.

#### Contemporary Population 1983

Laurel's strategic location and historical development have contributed to the formation of four distinct communities (map 10). Although subject to testing, this characterization is a reflection of perception of the city by most residents. The segmentations are as follows:

1. Old historic Laurel families working locally with social focus in town.
2. Suburban bedroom community commuters with social focus on far away workplace, residences maintained primarily for convenience to work place.
3. Urban homesteader/spa city property owner, with social functions focusing on work place and in status activities. Residence maintained for investment or tax shelter.
4. Transient population attracted by low rent, civic services, new business opportunities and local employment.

Current study indicates that despite suburban commuter residents, the city's life and image still relies heavily upon the development of the older community through the adoption and absorption of transients. This process, seemingly running throughout Laurel's urban history warrants further study, testing, and clarification. In sum, Laurel's history has left the area with a wealth of cultural, architectural, and atmospheric diversity. The city inherited a complex urban mosaic existing in a delicate balance between cultural diversity and developmental change.

### Conclusion

Research within Laurel as a study area should attempt to test, isolate, and provide further information concerning the assumptions and reconstructions presented above. Attempts should be made to continually refine the descriptions presented; in the case of prehistoric populations of speculated presence and absence, and in the case of historic cultures basic trends and developments, leading to eventual explanation and verifications. In pursuit of these long-term goals, Laurel's historical, archeological, and anthropological research should use the culture history and descriptions presented here to structure a broadly based regional research design which will evolve as study continues. Further study of the area should recognize the validity and importance of considering all phases of Laurel's prehistoric and historic past--toward the goal of clarifying the course of adaptation to this unique environment and to the prior modifications of that environment. It is hoped that this first attempt in the interpretation of Laurel's culture history will demonstrate the significance and complexity of the course of human history which was played out in this particular environmental setting.

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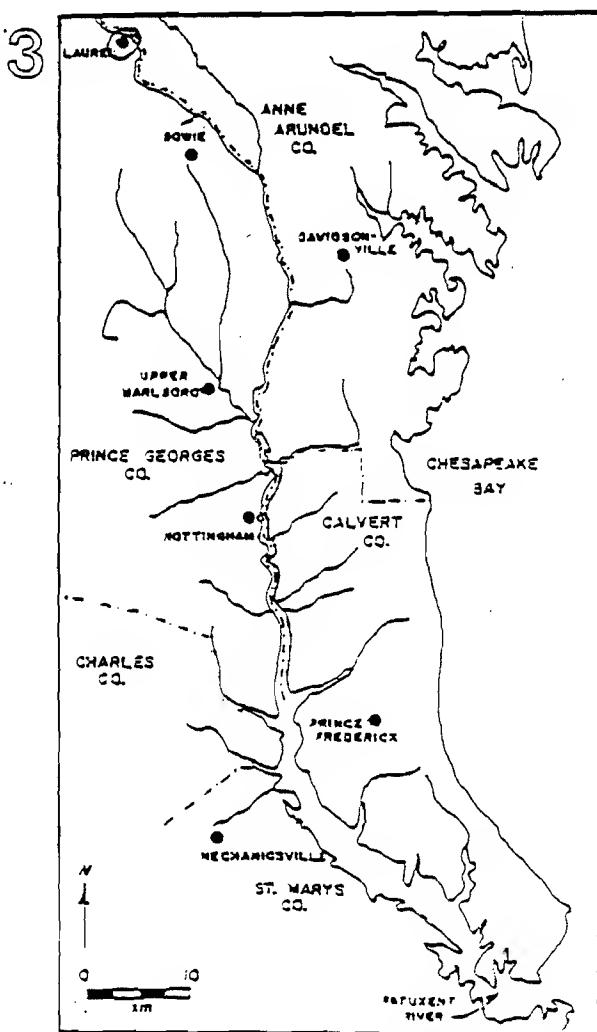
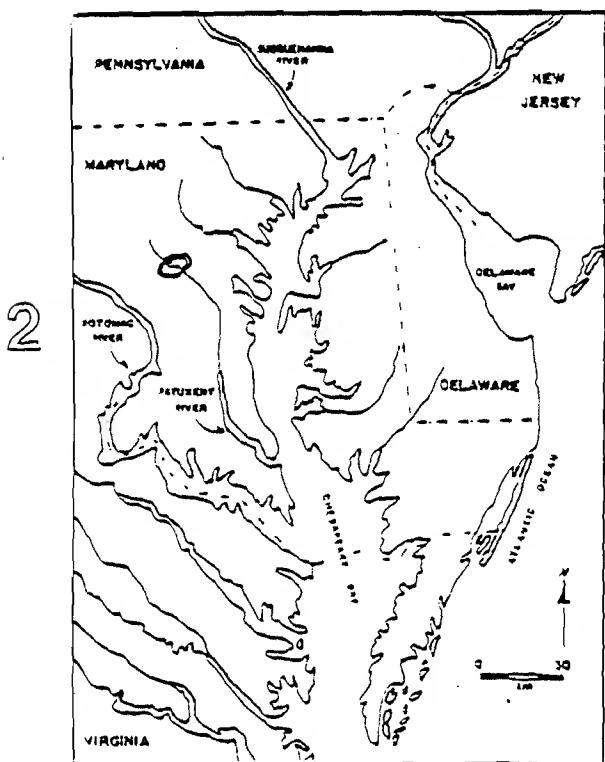
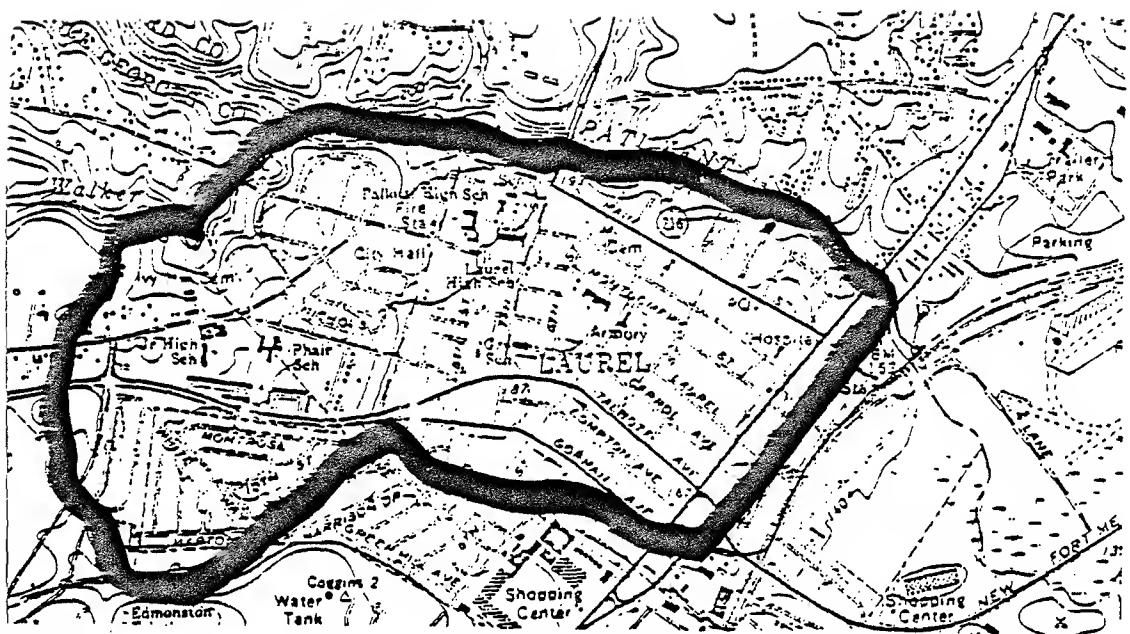
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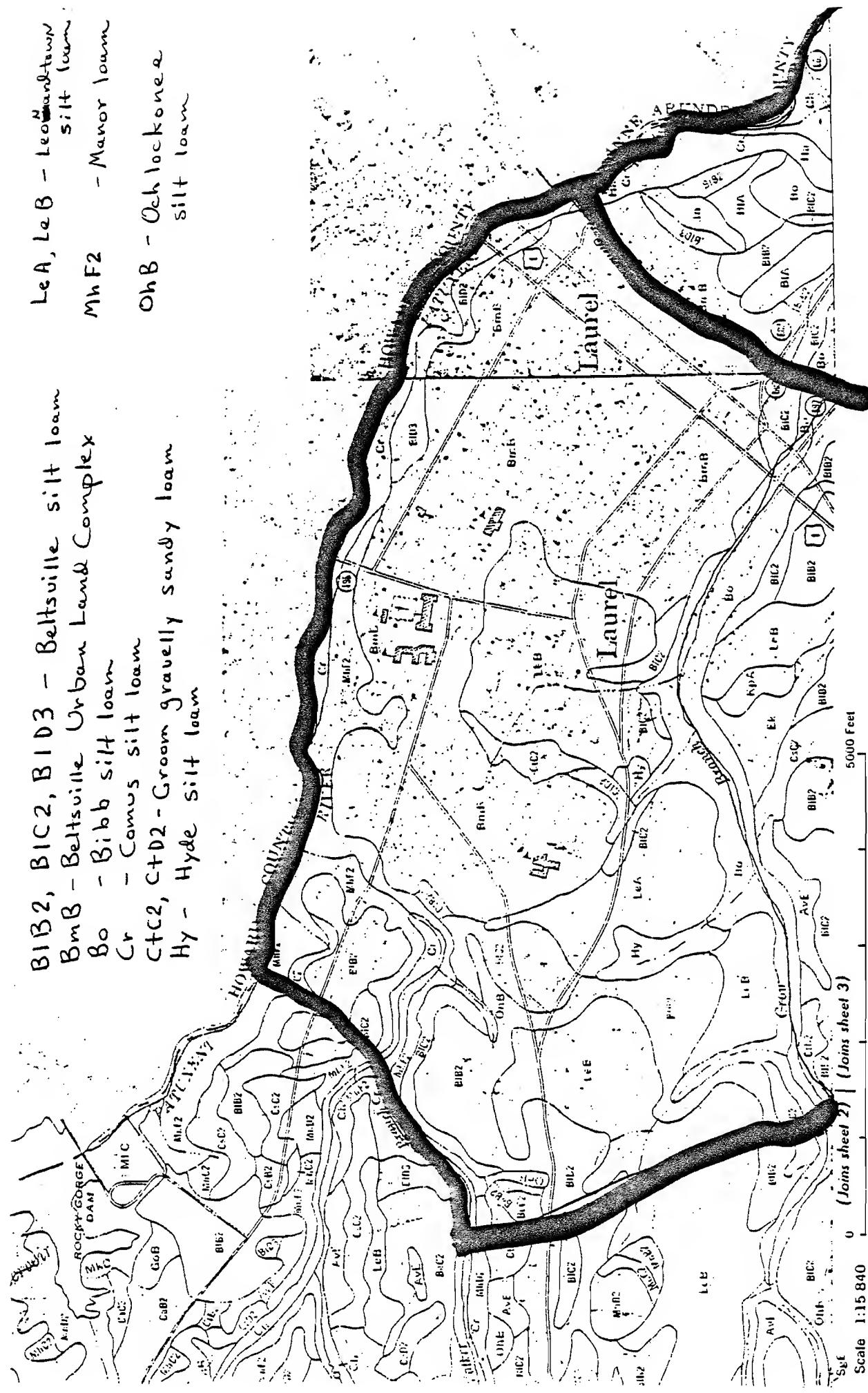
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- 14, 15. Sanbourne Map Co. 1897.
- 16a. Snowden Map, From Cook and Webster Montpelier and the Snowden Family, p. 15, Dennis Griffith State of MD Map 1794
- 16b. Traveler's Directory of 1804, see 16a.



## Soils within the Study Area

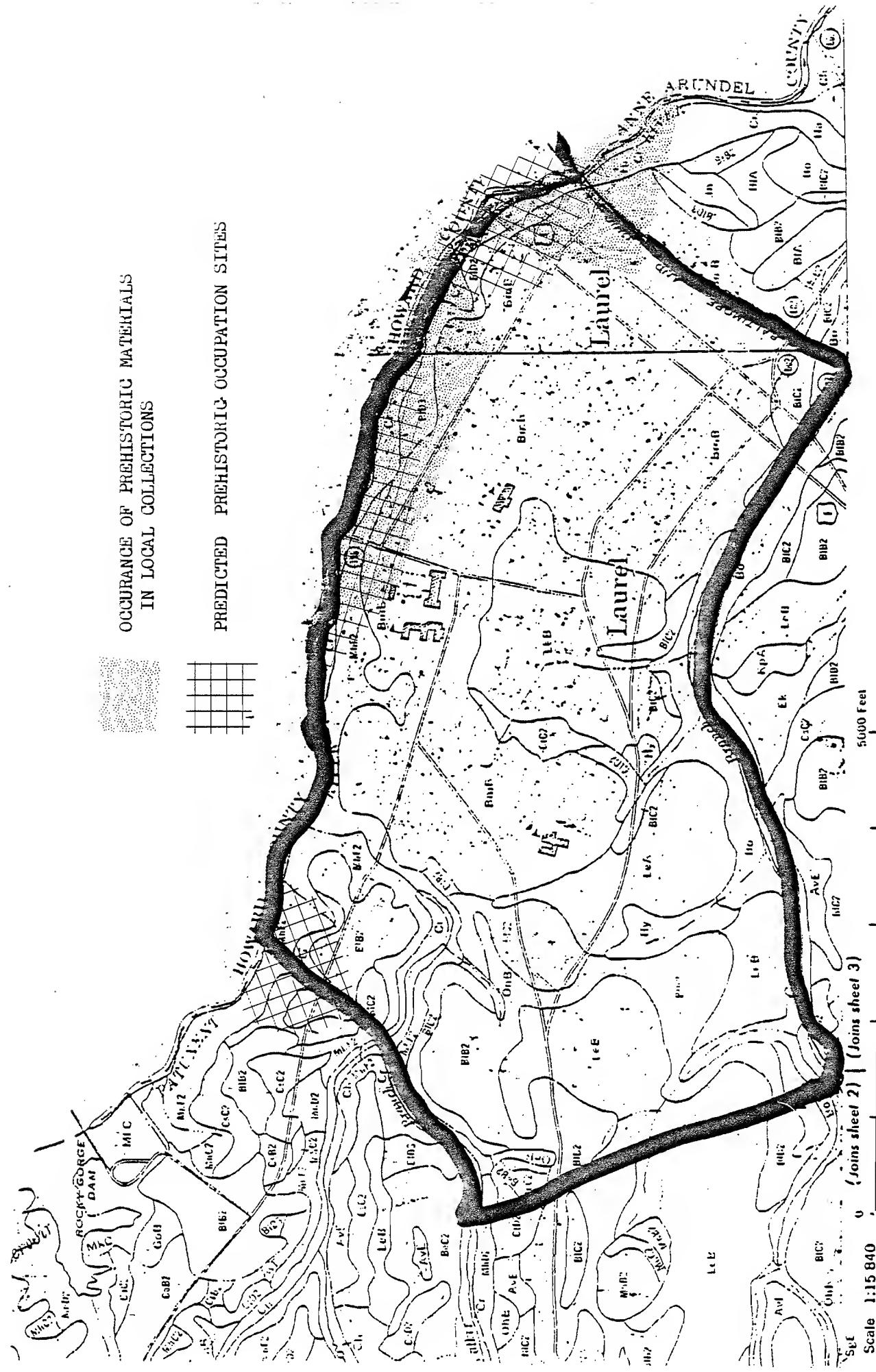
B1B2, B1C2, B1D3 - Beltsville silt loam  
 BmB - Beltsville Urban Land Complex  
 Bo - Bibb silt loam  
 Cr - Camus silt loam  
 C+D2, C+D3 - Groom gravelly sandy loam  
 Hy - Hyde silt loam  
 LeA, LeB - Leonardtown silt loam  
 MnF2 - Manor loam  
 OhB - Ochlockonee silt loam



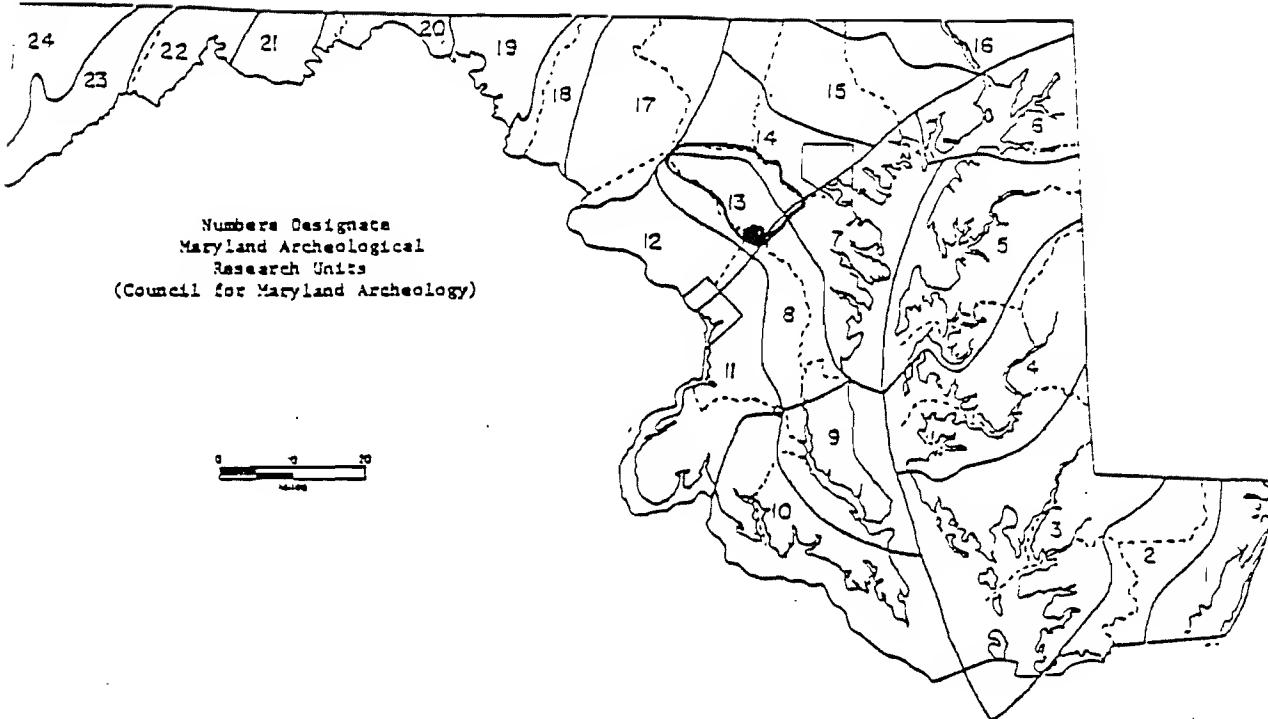
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OCCURANCE OF PREHISTORIC MATERIALS  
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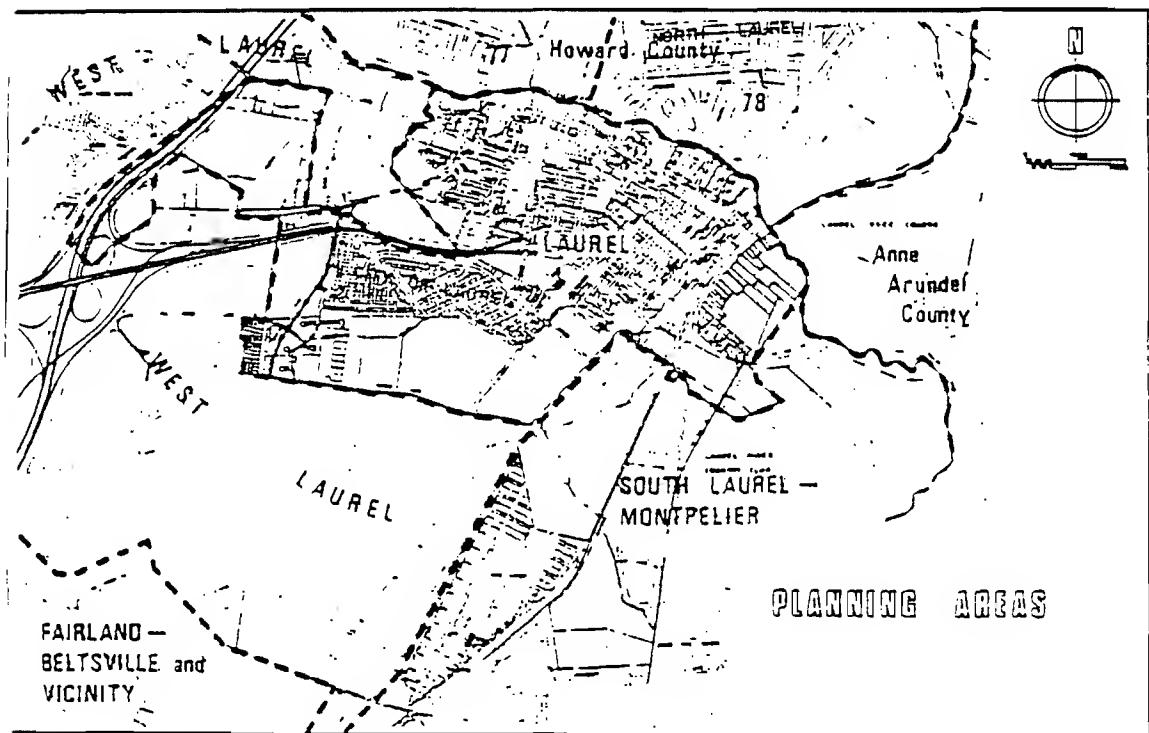
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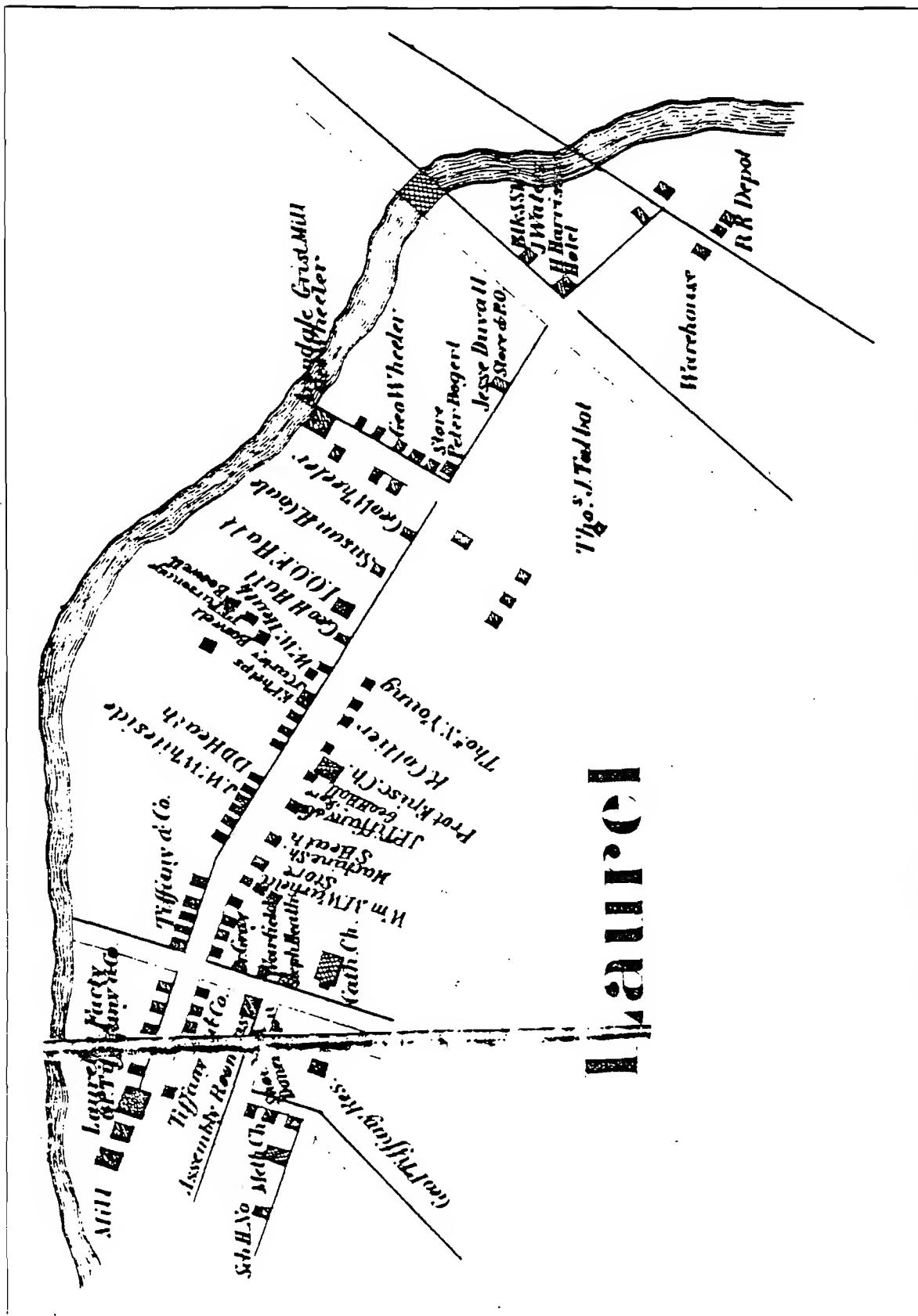


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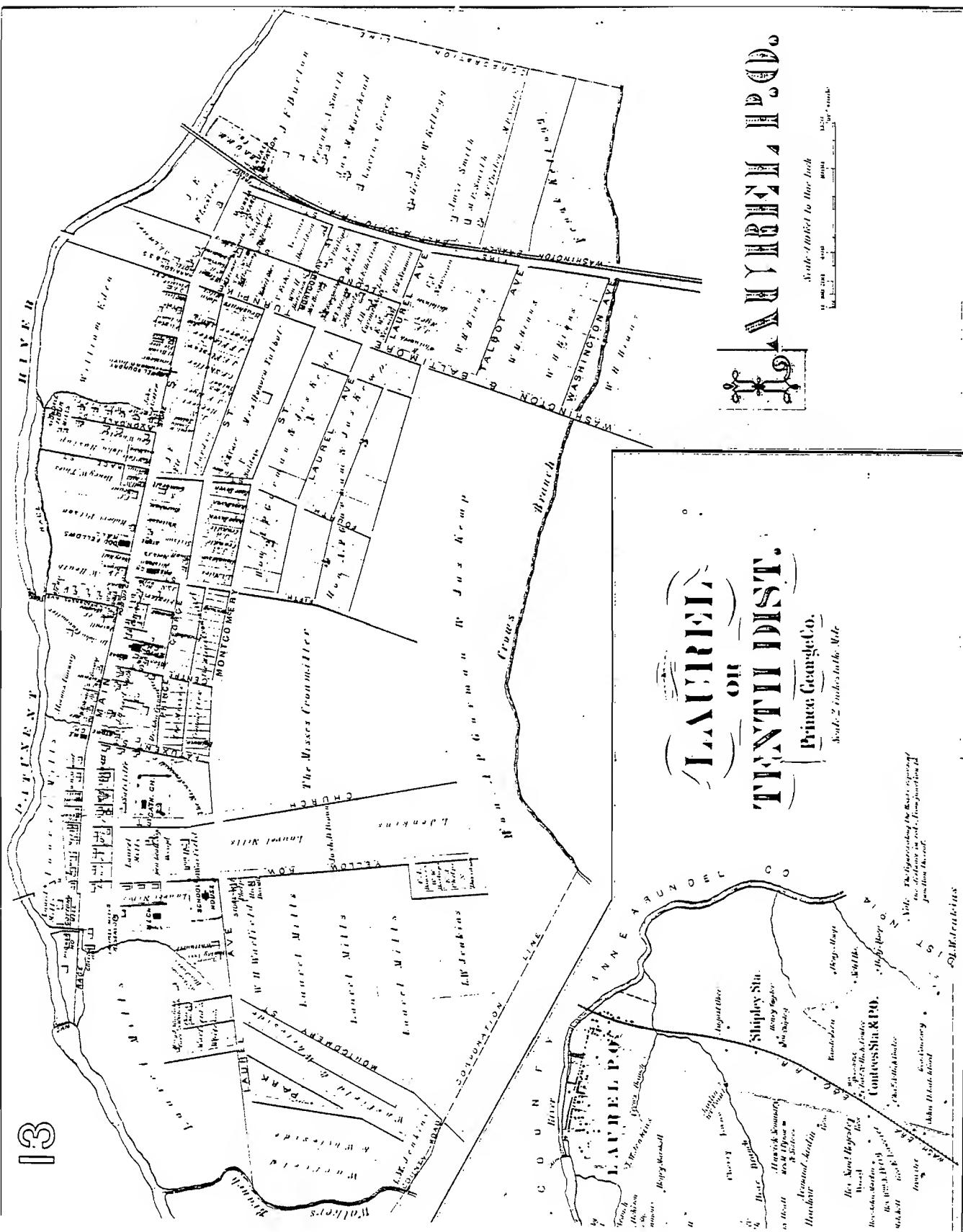


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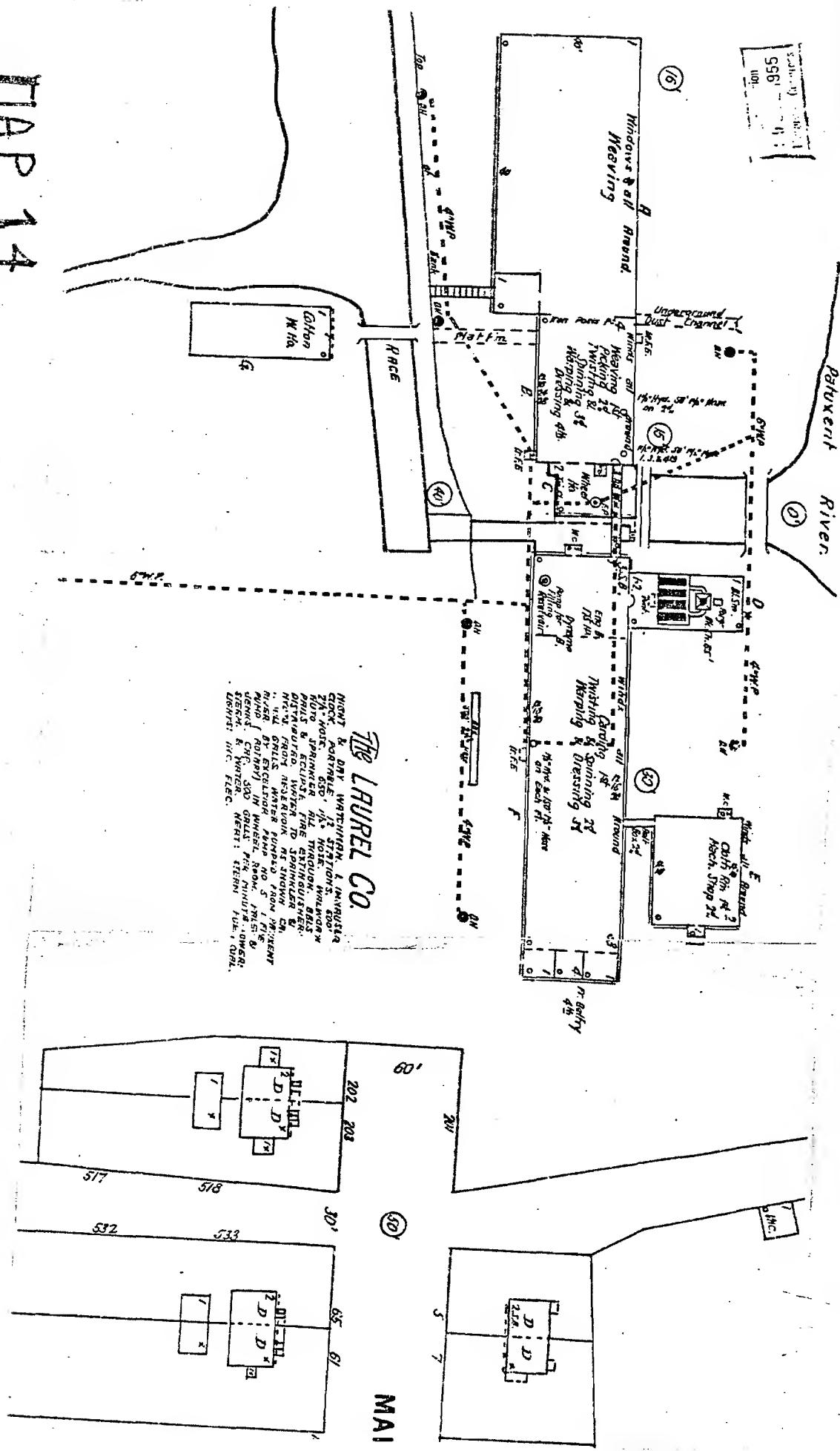




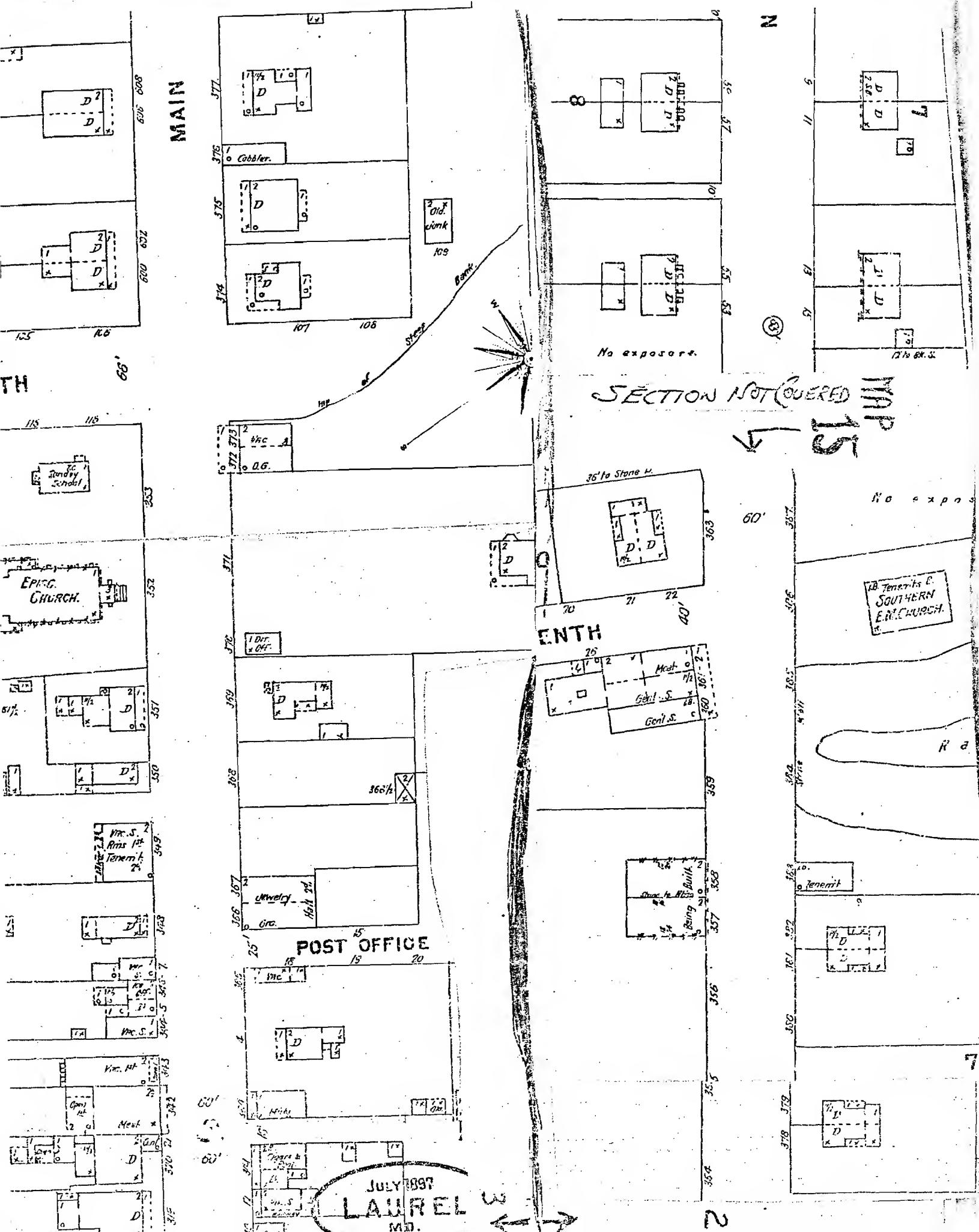
This is the Laurel segment of the Simon J. Martinet 1861 Map of Prince George's County.



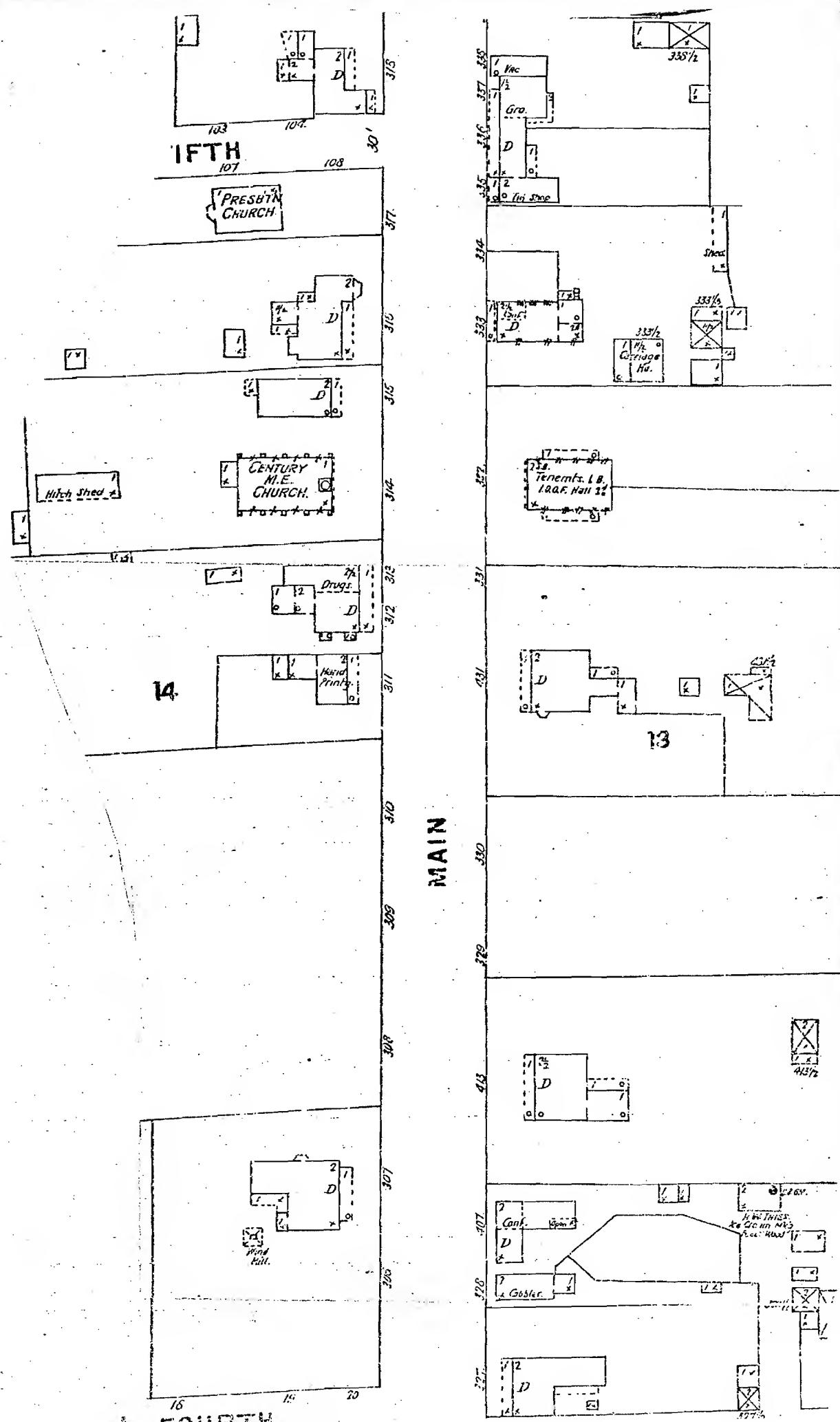
MAP 14



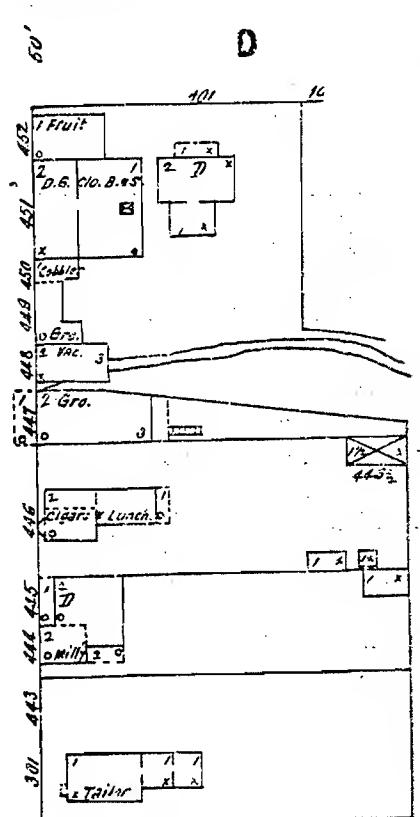
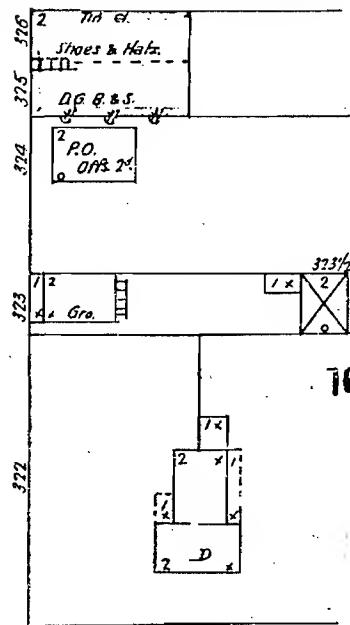
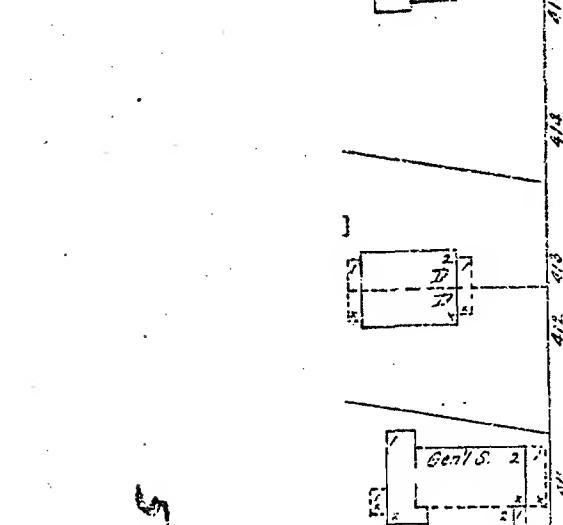
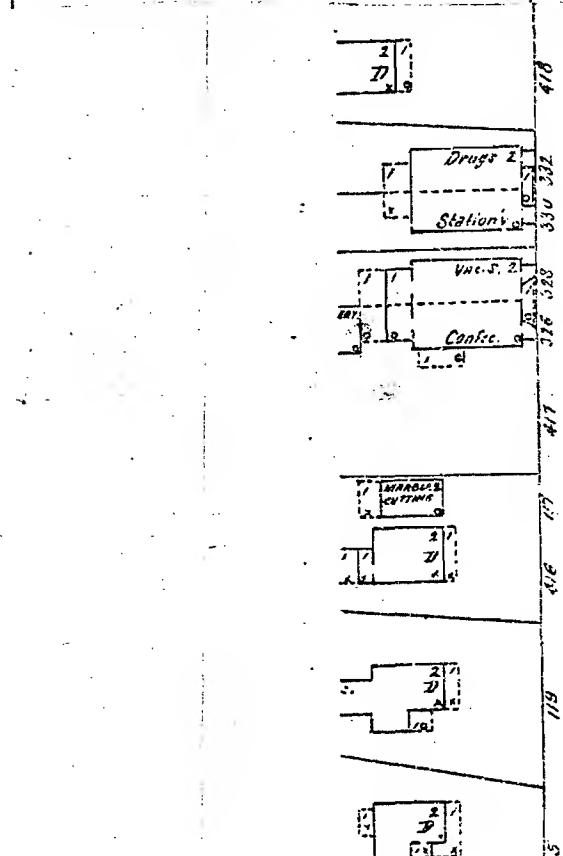
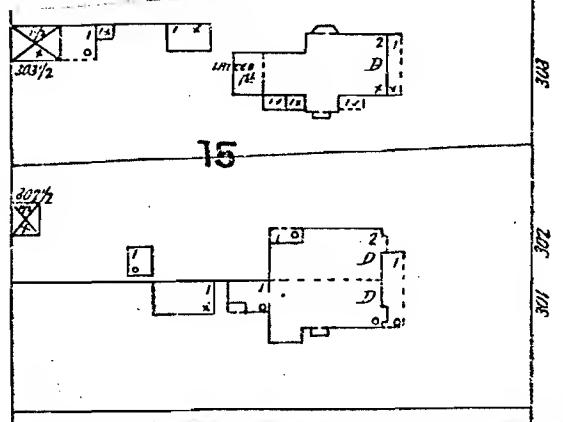
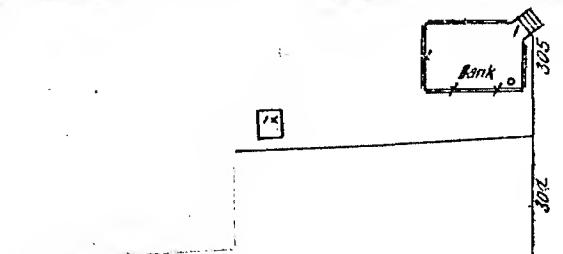






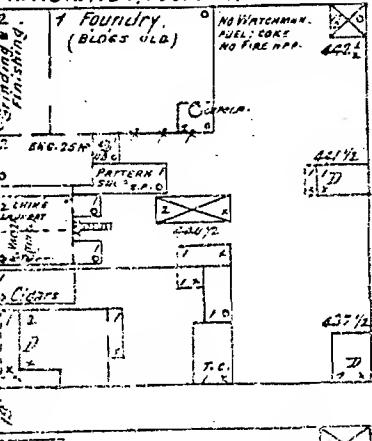






ST.

W.T.S. GIVEN, FOUNDRY.



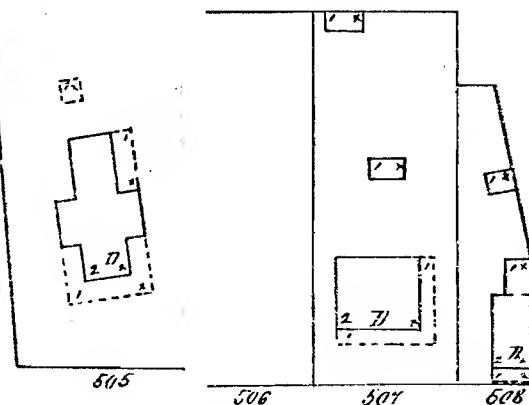




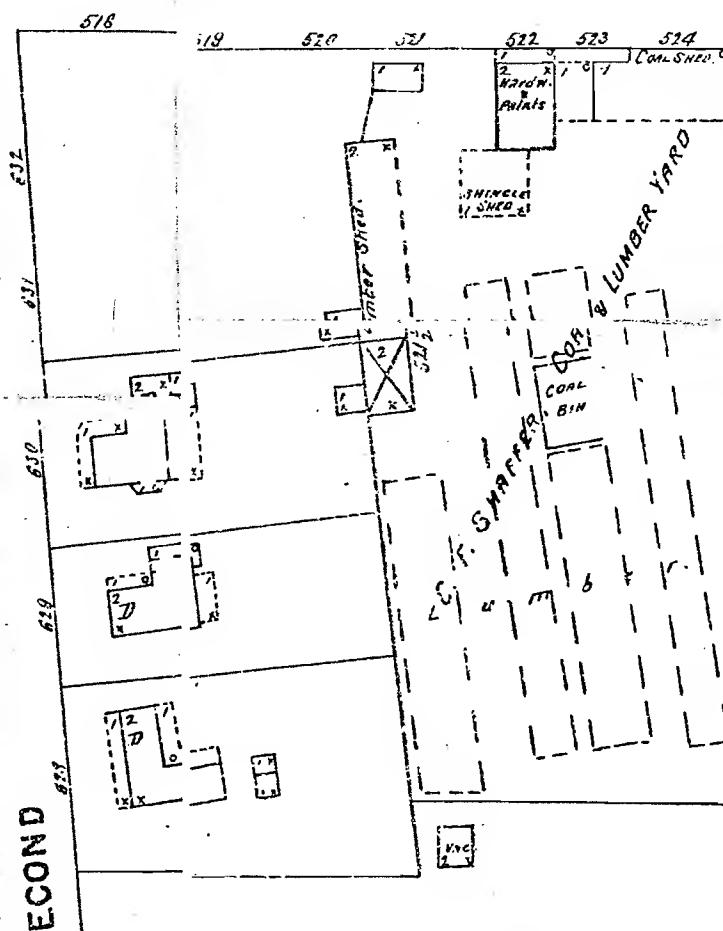


C. F. SHAFFER'S  
WOOD YARD.  
Scattered Piles of Wood.

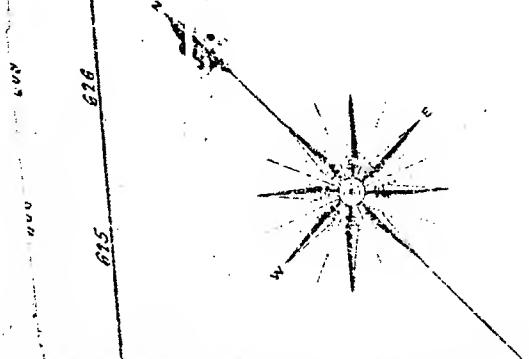
24



MAIN



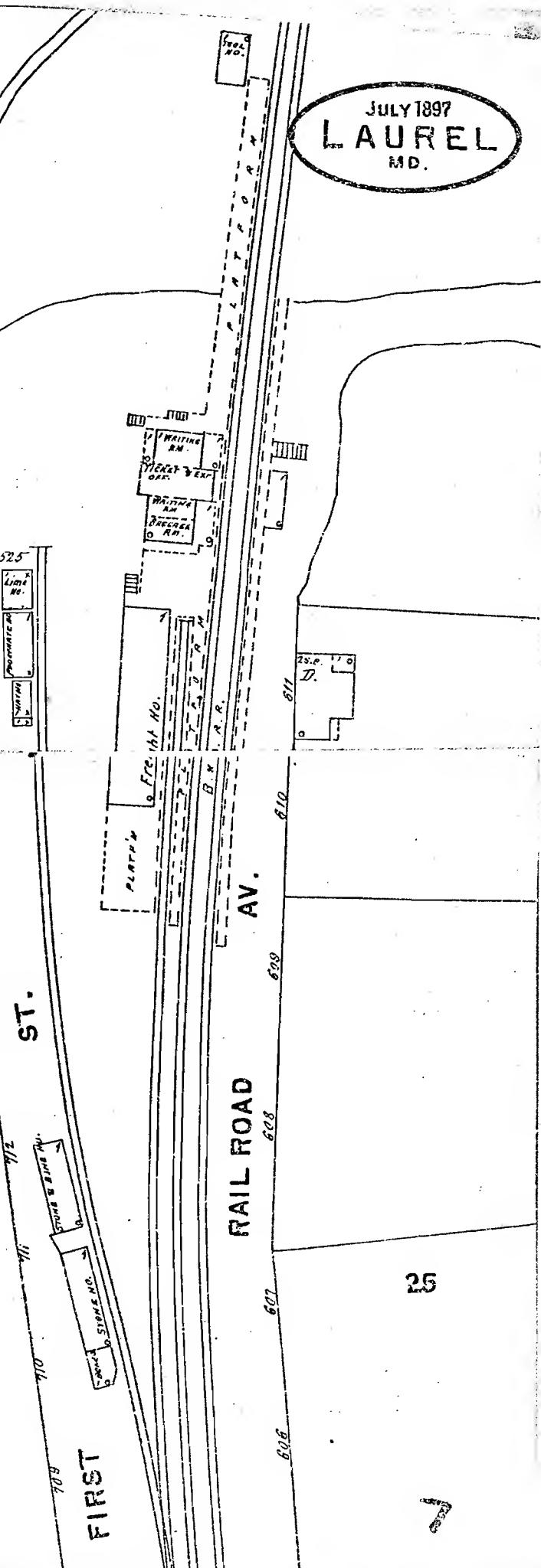
22



Scattered Piles of Wood.

Lumber W. Co.  
505

JULY 1897  
LAUREL  
MD.



25

7

